

Revolutions of Kyrgyzstan Timeline: An Open Source Look at Key Events

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When looking at the events in Kyrgyzstan, it is necessary to look at clan politics in the country. Clan politics are not an all encompassing answer to why things happen in Kyrgyzstan; it simply helps explain some of the people and the motivation behind events, particularly in regard to resource competition. Clan politics were a significant aspect of the 2005 and 2010 revolutions and of the current political system emerging from the October 2010 parliamentary elections. For the purposes of this timeline the term “clans” is defined as an informal organization based on kinship ties, whether these ties are real or perceived. Clans are synonymous with tribes; the real ties are based on familial relationships, however distantly related, while perceived ties are based on non-familial regional (provinces, districts, towns, even specific neighborhoods), and on other business or personal based relationships like classmates or colleagues.¹

Clans are difficult to identify, especially for a westerner, since they have no tangible characteristics. Clans will also not appear in the news as the reasons behind events. People are not able to simply leave their clan and join another; they grow up into clans as part of their lives. The size of a clan is also difficult to know, estimates put them anywhere from 2,000 to 20,000 members and they are made up of all classes, not just the wealthy.²

Clan politics can help explain historical events, especially the participants involved in the two revolutions. In Kyrgyzstan during the Soviet Union there was already a competition over resources between clans. The various clans were in competition with each other over access to resources; the key difference at that time was that they also answered to a higher authority, the Communist Party in Moscow. Clans in Kyrgyzstan can be roughly divided up between those in the north in competition with those in the south of the country.

Clan leaders would be appointed to key leadership positions in the Kyrgyz Communist Party, where they would in turn appoint and promote fellow clan members. This clan patronage system took resources, especially economic resources, from the state and diverted them to the clan. They did this until Moscow would find out what had been happening, purge the leadership, and then appoint people with more loyalty to the state and not clans. The process of appointments and purges would repeat itself until the end of the Soviet Union when Akayev, an outsider of the long ruling southern Kyrgyz clans, took the reins in Kyrgyzstan. Moscow appointed him because he had no ties to the southern clan, which had been purged from the ranks of the Kyrgyz Communist Party in the 1980s for rampant corruption.

Following the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991, Kyrgyzstan made the most progress to a democratic government and market economy than its Central Asian neighbors, or at least that was the image Kyrgyz president (Akayev) portrayed to the world. He followed a similar path of appointing those closest to him, and eventually there was no opposition to stop this from happening. The Tulip Revolution in 2005 was, in effect, the purge of clan leadership.

However, clan politics does not always explain what happens on the street in Osh or Bishkek. For that reason, this timeline also looks at key street level security events alongside the larger geopolitical events in Kyrgyzstan from open source, Kyrgyz and Russian media.

Although the Tulip Revolution in 2005 can be summed up as a conflict between clans, the dispute between the northern clans (with Akayev as a leader) and the southern clans (with Bakiyev emerging as a figurehead), there are a few points for street level security interests:

During the Tulip Revolution large groups of people gathered quickly for protests (mainly against the government), and authorities rarely intervened. Security forces used intermittent violence against these crowds; in some instances non-lethal force was used to break up a protest. Akayev never ordered lethal force to be used, even on March 24.

Some of the protests/crowds targeted specific institutions, infrastructure, and even took government hostages. The seizure of airports in Jalal-Abad and Osh crippled efforts by Bishkek to reinforce security in the southern cities/regions; planes from Bishkek simply couldn't land and the road connecting north to south was blocked. Additionally, police stations came under attack and some police took off their uniforms and joined the crowds. Also, after police disappeared following the collapse of Akayev's government, certain elements were able to go out and steal at the Central Department Store; specifically it was a time for criminals to target the shops with the best products/goods.

What can be understood from this is that Kyrgyz crowds (or perhaps key, intelligent individuals) knew which infrastructure to target to disrupt the government and the security apparatus' control over the situation. These lessons would be later applied to some extent in April 2010.

The speed of the revolution in April 2010 surprised many, in a matter of a few days Bakiyev lost power and fled the country. From a security perspective this revolution was different, the president (or someone in power) gave an order to shoot people in the crowds on the square, which only emboldened the protests. It may not be exactly clear who the shooters were, but it was clear from the reports that protestors were killed by the shots (some were shot in the head), not wounded. Knowing that and how the crowd reacted to it is more important than who the shooter was.

The people involved in the revolution employed measures similar to the Tulip Revolution to disrupt the government. They targeted infrastructure, such as attempts to take the police station in Talas, and even taking the Interior Minister hostage. From photos taken on the ground in and around the square, it seemed as though the same cast of characters had gathered for a five year reunion.³

The June 2010 interethnic violence in the Osh and Jalal-Abad provinces was an unparalleled event in Central Asia due to the damage and displacement it caused in a short amount of time. This kind of incident can be called a number of things: riots, disorder, or interethnic violence.

Most importantly, it is the kind of conflict most likely to be seen in Central Asia in the near future. There is not likely to be a state on state war in Central Asia, but rather conflict on a lower level, among and between people. There are two anecdotes on how the conflict started; either a fight between young Uzbek and Kyrgyz men spilled from a bar/casino into the streets in the Osh province and grew in size as ‘reinforcements’ of each ethnic group arrived on the scene, or that a revenge killing took place by one ethnic group against a man who had beaten up a prostitute at a hotel. In either case, the conflict was related to resource competition, but mainly it was street crime exacerbated already bad feelings between Kyrgyz and Uzbeks to fan out into violence.

Another consideration for the future of conflict in Central Asia is that the lines between the belligerents will not be easy to discern. In Kyrgyzstan some groups targeted specific security and military infrastructure; some were even able to take police equipment and weapons, including an armored personnel carrier. Uzbeks claimed that Kyrgyz security forces participated or were complicit in the violence. Whether it was actual Kyrgyz security forces or those who used stolen weapons and equipment, there is some validity to Uzbek claims; even if the weapons used against Uzbeks were stolen it meant security forces allowed it to happen. The lack of security also allowed various criminals to loot shops. The looting, and burning, of businesses was targeted and very specific; on some streets only a few businesses were burned while others were left untouched. There were also reports of militias that formed on both sides to protect neighborhoods and take revenge.⁴

A final consideration is the response of the various security organizations involved in the region. The organization with the most vested interests for security in the region is the CSTO; the organization decided not to send a peacekeeping or rapid reaction force to Kyrgyzstan. They claimed that it was strictly an internal matter and not within the charter of the organization to get involved. Instead they offered to provide material and equipment to the military and security forces of Kyrgyzstan.

There were similar responses from the SCO and the OSCE, offering humanitarian aid and from the latter a police mission to advise and conduct training seminars; again staying within the respective organizations’ mandates. Ultimately, the organizations followed a close line with what they were set up for in the first place and their responses may not deserve the harsh criticism leveled at them from the Kyrgyz, they were after all the eventual source that brought some of the aid into the region, particularly Russia. However, could these organizations have done more? Looking at this from the outside in, the security organizations did what they were expected to. Their mandate is for large scale types of conflict involving state-like actor or incidents that violate the borders of the organization’s members. They do not get involved in the domestic situation of a member country. Simply put, they do not interfere with the affairs of another country, however bad the situation might be.

2005 Tulip Revolution

February 27, 2005

The first round of parliamentary elections occurs, 29 clear winners are announced including Azimbek Beknazarov and Temir Sariyev (members of post-Bakiyev government), and Aydar Akayev – the president’s son. Run-off elections among the remaining 86 candidates will be held on March 13.⁵

February 28, 2005

A group of 1,000 to 3,000 gathered to protest electoral violations in the town of Aravan, the capital of the Aravan district, in the Osh province.⁶

March 3, 2005

The apartment of Roza Otunbayeva, the leader of the opposition party Ata-Dzhurt Movement, was damaged by an explosion from a grenade thrown onto the balcony.⁷ Police find shrapnel and parts a RGD-5 (Russian manufactured) grenade. No one was in the apartment at the time of the explosion.⁸

March 5, 2005

In response to opposition rallies that started in Jalal-Abad on March 3, 2005, pro-government forces organized approximately 500 protestors demanding that rallies by the opposition be stopped; approving of the policies of President Akayev.⁹

March 6, 2005

Several hundred supporters of candidates who lost in the parliamentary elections protested at a rally in Jalal-Abad. The protestors demanded that the election results be declared invalid. At the same time 1,000 people stage a counter protest, calling on the opposition protestors to end their rally. Police with rubber clubs lined up between the groups, but no violence occurred.¹⁰

March 7, 2005

Several political parties forms a large coalition known as “The Forum of Political Forces of Kyrgyzstan” Members include: the People’s Movement of Kyrgyzstan, lead by Kurmanbek Bakiyev; the Ata-Dzhurt Public and Political Movement, lead by Roza Otunbayeva; the Dzhany-Bagyt Public and Political Movement, lead by Muratbek Imanaliyev; and the People’s Congress of Kyrgyzstan lead by Almazbek Atambayev. The forum suggests to the Kyrgyz parliament that an early presidential election should take place within three months, to prevent further instability. They also place the responsibility for any possible deterioration of inter-ethnic relations on the government.¹¹

March 9, 2005

Protestors gather in Osh to protest the results of the February parliamentary elections and call for the resignation of Kyrgyz president Akayev. The protestors continuetheir rally on March 15, 2005 with around 200 people.¹²

March 14, 2005

Opposition supporters held protests in the Uzgen and Alai Districts in the Osh Province. Members of the Central Electoral Commission of Kyrgyzstan were dispatched to these regions to

examine people's complaints.¹³ Over 5,000 supporters of parliamentary candidate Ravshan Dzheenbekov, a loser in the election, broke through a police cordon and seized the administrative building in the Talas Province. The protestors refused to leave and demanded the election results be annulled. A group of police are posted near the building, but no further cases of aggression occur.¹⁴

March 15, 2005

Opposition leaders Roza Otunbayeva and Kurmanbek Bakiyev call for Akayev's resignation at a "kurultai" (a kurultai is a meeting of elders and leaders in Kyrgyz culture) in the central square in Jalal-Abad. Around 5,000 people were in attendance with 300 police also nearby.¹⁵ The Kyrgyz Interior Ministry confirms that the governor of the Talas Province and the head of the Bakay-Ata District in the Talas Province are being held hostage by supporters of a parliamentary candidate who lost in the election. The police have not intervened in the incident.¹⁶ President Akayev makes a televised address to the nation, citing that the election was a success and international observers assessed there were no irregularities in the election process. Akayev states the organizations involved in the monitoring process include: Institute for International Democracy and Electoral Assistance, CIS mission of observers, Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) observers, and Kyrgyz NGO coalitions and associations. President Akayev also states that in international observers' opinions, not one violation was serious enough to call into question the election results and that there are some politicians who lost the elections that are calling for the overthrow of power. He said that these actions will not be tolerated and warns people not to follow along with protests.¹⁷

March 16, 2005

Approximately 150-200 protestors seize the district administrative building in the Bazar-Kurgan District (of the Jalal-Abad Province) taking captive two district administrators. Police free the administrators later in the evening. The Bazar-Kurgan is the same district where Kurmanbek Bakiyev lost the March 13 run-off parliamentary election.¹⁸

March 17, 2005

The Kyrgyz opposition was not able to conduct a planned kurultay (congress) in the northwestern Talas Province. Police blocked the road into the province, preventing opposition leaders Bakiyev and Otunbayeva from meeting with approximately 3,000 protestors that were expecting their arrival. The opposition leaders wanted to set up a congress similar to the one established in Jalal-Abad on March 15, 2005. The opposition wanted their congress to govern the region instead of the state organizations.¹⁹

March 18, 2005

Supporters of an opposition candidate who lost in the March 13 run-off elections occupy the Toktogol District, Jalal-Abad Province administration building.²⁰ Also, other opposition supporters seize the Osh Province administration building. Around 700 supporters are in the building and the police are not intervening. A number of the supporters are from the Ata-Dzhurt Movement.²¹ The building seizures are two of several; the administration buildings in Uzgen (Osh Province), and Toktogul, Tash-Kumyr (Jalal-Abad Province) are also under occupation.

Additionally, rallies by opposition supporters are happening in the capital, Bishkek and the road between Bishkek and Osh remains blocked at two points.²²

March 20, 2005

Administrative buildings in the cities of Osh and Jala-Abad that were occupied by opposition supporters are stormed by special operation forces of the Kyrgyzstani Interior Ministry (OMON). The supporters occupying the buildings threw Molotov cocktails in defense, but OMON troops are able to reassert control 15-30 minutes after the assault begins. The Talas Provincial building remains under the control of protestors.²³ Later in the day protestors seize the city police building in Jalal-Abad; police flee the building after firing blanks into the air. Supporters of ten opposition members being held by the Osh regional police are reported to be taking action to secure their release. It was reported that ten opposition members were being kept in the Osh regional police department and that their supporters may take action to release them.²⁴ Kyrgyz authorities prepare to hold talks with opposition representatives, specifically Prime Ministers Nikolay Tanayev and speak with an opposition leader who organized the events in Jalal-Abad. Tanayev confirms that the mayor's office and the airport in Jalal-Abad had been seized by opposition protestors, who have also strewn the runway with stones and set fires to tires in order to prevent police reinforcement from arriving by plane from Bishkek.²⁵ Protestors meet no resistance from police during the seizure.²⁶

March 21, 2005

Opposition supporters in Osh break into the city police department and offices of security services. Approximately 1,000 protestors first gather near the regional administration building, then move toward the administrative buildings and begin throwing stones and Molotov cocktails. A fire breaks out that protestors extinguish. No officials were inside the administration building during these events, and no police can be seen on the streets.²⁷ A rally takes place in the town of Karakol (northern Issyk-Kol Province). The participants claim they were concerned about opposition powers seizing state agencies and administrative buildings in the south. They state these actions negatively affect the well-being and economic development of the country.²⁸ Around 200 opposition supporters seize the airport in Osh, the largest in southern Kyrgyzstan, and attempt to destroy the airport's equipment. Pleas from the airport director persuade the opposition supporters not to destroy the equipment. The airport seizure effectively seals off southern Kyrgyzstan from the north as the road from Osh to Bishkek remains blocked. Only the airport in the Batken Province remains open and it can only receive small planes like the Yak-40 and An-24, planes which can carry 32 and 52 passengers respectively.²⁹

March 22, 2005

Mass riots paralyze the city of Osh, as protestors continue to seize key government buildings. Shops and schools have close as protestors urge police to join them. Some media reports that Hizb ut-Tahrir gangs are marauding through the streets. Contrary to these reports, there is no evidence of Hizb ut-Tahrir activity.³⁰ Hizb ut-Tahrir is an Islamic movement banned in Kyrgyzstan. It started in the 1950s its stated its goal is to create an Islamic caliphate (state) in the world through non-violent means.

March 23, 2005

A pro government rally is held in the Batken Province; 2,000 protestors take part. The protestors demand that people not take part in opposition activity. The opposition takes control of the Kadamzhay District (Batken Province) on March 22; however the situation in the province is generally quiet.³¹ Several dozen police disperse a crowd of around 300 opposition supporters in central Bishkek. The protestors try to storm the Kyrgyz Government House, but the police separate the crowd into several groups and arrest some protestors. Edil Baysalov, the leader of the For Democracy and Civil Society NGO, is among those arrested.³²

March 24, 2005

An opposition rally starts in Bishkek with an estimated 300 people, growing to over 700 persons throughout the day. The protestors intend to protest until the Kyrgyz president resigns. There are no police near the rally but there are traffic police on a major road adjacent to the building.³³ About 5,000 opposition members take control of the square in front of the Kyrgyz government building in Bishkek. Special police units are blocking entrances to the building. Kurmanbek Bakiyev calls on the president to see the number of people present and to resign.³⁴ The crowd in and around the main square outside the Kyrgyz government building is reportedly throwing stones at police protecting the building, and in turn Akayev supporters are throwing stones at opposition supporters. Some police fire blanks in order to disperse the crowd, with no result.³⁵ Another rally is simultaneously taking place in front of the history museum building, led by Kurmanbek Bakiyev. Police do not stop the rally, but are guarding the building. There are reports that people in civilian clothing armed with clubs and shields are attacking those in the rally, as participants defend themselves.³⁶ Participants of the morning rallies take over the president's building; police put up no resistance. Documents and other office equipment were thrown from the windows as people moved freely throughout the building.³⁷ President Akayev remains in the capital and has not issued an order to use force to restore order.³⁸ Later in the day the Supreme Court of Kyrgyzstan annuls the results of the parliamentary elections.³⁹

March 25, 2005

Looters and police clash in Bishkek near the Central Department Store (TsUM). Some recently formed neighborhood militias have joined on the side of police. The police are ordered to use weapons against bandits and looters.⁴⁰

April 4, 2005

President Askar Akayev officially resigns at the Kyrgyz embassy in Moscow.⁴¹

2005-2010 – Bakiyev's reign

Following the Tulip Revolution there was genuine hope in Kyrgyzstan of real reform in the political and economic sectors, or at least that there would be more resource and power sharing among clans. Over the years Bakiyev became more authoritarian and appointed his family and clan members to positions of power, instead of distributing power more widely. Those who had

helped bring about the Tulip Revolution became disillusioned that there would be any kind of democracy in Kyrgyzstan, and have more access to resources.⁴²

As Bakiyev became more powerful, he became paranoid of another revolution and consolidated control over political, military, and security positions.⁴³ Bakiyev also came under fire because of a deal he made with Russia where Kyrgyzstan would receive a several billion dollar economic investment package in return for removing the U.S. military from the Manas Air Transit Center outside Bishkek. Bakiyev never removed the U.S. from Manas, frustrating Russia because a portion of the investment had already been paid.

Additionally, it was around this time that media reports started up about the U.S. and Russia being involved in a 'base race' in Central Asia, specifically in Kyrgyzstan. The so called race were other actions; Russia consolidate its five military installations in Kyrgyzstan under one command, and the other actions were plans put forth by Russia and the U.S. to open training centers in southern Kyrgyzstan. There was not a plan by Russia or the U.S. for any additional military presence.⁴⁴

While Bakiyev's reign contributes to the disillusionment in the government, there are several events in late 2009 and early 2010 that push the situation over the edge. Defense Minister Ismail Isakov leaves his position and joins the opposition, only later to be tried and sentenced to eight years in prison for misusing state resources.⁴⁵ Isakov is a popular and respected figure not only in military/security circles, but was also nationally well respected.

Additionally, Bakiyev clamps down on the freedom of the media, blocking news websites on the internet. He also raises electricity prices on an already strained electric grid. At about the same time Russia introduces new export duties on light oil products (petrol and diesel) sent to Kyrgyzstan.⁴⁶

2010 'Roza' Revolution

April 3, 2010

Kyrgyz police shut down a demonstration outside the Kyrgyz Parliament building where UN General Secretary Ban Ki-moon met with members of parliament. The protestors included opposition activists, journalists, and human rights advocates – Temir Sariyev was among those protesting.⁴⁷

April 6, 2010

Several hundred protestors gather in the city of Talas to protest the detention of opposition leader Bolot Sherniyazov (deputy head of Ata-Meken), he is released after demands from protestors. There are conflicting reports, coming from protestors and the Kyrgyz Interior Minister, about the seizure of the government administration building in the Talas Province.⁴⁸ Sherniyazov had been

detained because he allegedly planned to hold an opposition ‘kurultai’ in parts of the country to express no confidence in the country’s leadership.⁴⁹

April 7, 2010

Kyrgyz police detain several opposition leaders including Temir Sariyev (leader of the Ak-Shumkar party), Omurbek Tekebayev (leader of Ata-Meken), and Almazbek Atambayev (leader of the Social Democratic Party).⁵⁰ Protestors in Talas make three attempts to seize the city police station. The situation deteriorates so much that the Interior Minister Moldomusa Kongatiyev arrives in Talas.⁵¹ Meanwhile, protestors seize the administration building in Naryn Province.⁵² In Bishkek protestors gather and make several attempts to break into the main government building in Ala-Too Square. Police use tear gas and noise grenades to drive protestors away.⁵³ President Kurmanbek Bakiyev imposes a state of emergency and a curfew in the Talas, Naryn, and Chuy Provinces to be enforced from 2200-0600 local time. The decree effectively gives more power to police and security officials to maintain order.⁵⁴ Several opposition leaders arrested on April 6 have been released, including Temir Sariyev and Omurbek Tekebayev. Tekebayev then joins up with his supporters near the government building.⁵⁵ Interior Minister Moldomusa Kongantiyev has been taken hostage by protestors in Talas and reportedly beaten. His condition was said to be grave.⁵⁶ After a few attempts to force their way into the Government House, protestors and opposition leaders succeed in taking power in Kyrgyzstan. Prime Minister Daniyar Ussenov steps down from his post as Roza Otunbayeva is made acting leader.⁵⁷

April 8, 2010

Kurmanbek Bakiyev, who fled Bishkek on April 7, is in Jalal-Abad and trying to rally enough support to return to power.⁵⁸ Several dozen Russian paratroopers carrying small arms are dispatched to the Russian airbase in Kant, Kyrgyzstan. They are there to protect the families of the Russian military.⁵⁹ The interim government makes plans to restore state ownership over facilities that were privatized during Bakiyev’s presidency. The facilities include electric, fuel, and telecommunications companies. Roza Otunbayeva announces the government will restore electricity tariffs to the previous level and that the agreement on the U.S. Transit Shipment Centre at Manas will remain unchanged.⁶⁰ Supporters of the ex-Interior Minister, Moldomusa Kongantiyev, block the Bishkek-Osh highway. They are demanding the release of Kongantiyev, who is still being held hostage in Talas.⁶¹

April 15, 2010

Bakiyev leaves Kyrgyzstan, according to OSCE Chairman Kanat Saudabayev.⁶²

April 16, 2010

Bakiyev officially resigns as president of Kyrgyzstan.⁶³

2010 May Incident

May 13, 2010

Supporters of the former regional governors (most regional governors who were in power under Bakiyev lost their positions following the April revolution) break into and take over the main government administration buildings in Osh, Jalal-Abad, and Batken.⁶⁴ The regional administration building in Batken is retaken by the end of the day.

May 14, 2010

Interim government security forces retake the Osh and Jalal-Abad administration buildings.⁶⁵ In a village outside Jalal-Abad, ousted president Bakiyev's house is burnt to the ground. Two of his brothers and another relative's houses are also burnt.⁶⁶

May 19, 2010

Clashes between Uzbeks and Kyrgyz take place in Jalal-Abad. Kyrgyz accuse Kadyrjan Batyrov, a prominent Uzbek businessman and founder of the People's Friendship University, of dramatizing the ethnic issues, between Kyrgyz and Uzbek people in the south.⁶⁷ There are unconfirmed reports that Uzbeks assist in retaking the administrative buildings from Bakiyev supporters a few days prior to this incident.

2010 Violence in Southern Kyrgyzstan

June 10, 2010

A curfew is imposed in the early morning, effective from 2000 to 0600 hours, in the city of Osh. Despite the curfew a large group of young people gather on the edge of the city. Mass disorder starts in the city center between various youth groups, including the destruction of shops and the burning of buildings and cars.⁶⁸

June 11, 2010

Additional law-enforcement units arrive in Osh from Bishkek. The units include armored personal carriers. At the same time a large group of aggressive Kyrgyz youth disarms a (government) patrol and head towards the part of the city inhabited by Uzbeks.⁶⁹

Russian President Dmitry Medvedev announces that the current situation in Kyrgyzstan does not require the involvement of armed forces from the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO). "The criteria for using CSTO forces include situations where a state or a non-state entity violates the borders of a CSTO member state."⁷⁰ Kyrgyz Internal Ministry troops are not in control of the situation in Osh, according to witnesses in the city. The troops only control the roads entering the city. No one is stopping looters in the city.⁷¹ In the city of Osh, a crowd of people hijack an armored personnel carrier and disarm the crews. The office of the commandant of Osh confirms the hijacking. It is also reported that Omurbek Tekebayev (Deputy Head of the Interim Government), Ismail Isakov (acting Defense Minister), and Azimbek Beknazarov (Head of Law Enforcement Structures) are in the city and coordinating with police and security agencies.⁷² While interethnic clashes take place in the south of Kyrgyzstan, members of the

Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) meet in nearby Tashkent, Uzbekistan for the second day of a two day summit. SCO members discuss assisting Kyrgyzstan when violence in the southern part of the country breaks out. Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov pledges that SCO members will give humanitarian aid to Kyrgyzstan.⁷³ President of Kazakhstan, Nursultan Nazarbayev, speaking at the SCO summit in Tashkent says that helping Kyrgyzstan will be a top priority during Kazakhstan's chairmanship of the SCO in 2011. He also mentions that humanitarian aid and loans should be given to Kyrgyzstan.⁷⁴ Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov mentions that SCO members should consider giving Kyrgyzstan humanitarian assistance.⁷⁵ UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon calls for calm following the violence in Osh. He urges the interim government to pay particular attention to inter-ethnic relations and to take measures to ensure the peaceful coexistence of all citizens in Kyrgyzstan.⁷⁶

June 12, 2010

The Kyrgyz government asks former law-enforcement officers for assistance in securing Osh. They call on former officers from the Defense Ministry, the Interior Ministry, security services, and even veterans from Afghanistan, regardless of political views for help.⁷⁷ Uzbekistan sends special units of border troops to secure the Kyrgyz border. In addition, Uzbekistan closes the entire Uzbek-Kyrgyz border.⁷⁸ Despite this, border guards at the Dostlik checkpoint allow ethnic Uzbeks to enter the country.⁷⁹ Around 6,000 refugees from the Osh Province cross the border according to the Red Crescent in Kyrgyzstan.⁸⁰ A special operation has been launched in the eastern part of the city of Osh to restore order.⁸¹ An officer at a border detachment in Osh dies after he is attacked by a group of people, reportedly seeking weapons.⁸² According to a CSTO spokeswoman, peacekeepers can only be sent to southern Kyrgyzstan through the CSTO charter and after consultations with CSTO member states. This announcement came after consultations with CSTO Secretary General, Nikolai Bordyuzha.⁸³ Russian President Medvedev has given instructions for aid to be given to Kyrgyzstan, specifically evacuation those injured and to help deliver medicine and other humanitarian cargo. A spokesperson for the president says that there are no conditions for Russian armed forces being used in Kyrgyzstan.⁸⁴ The Russian government announces that its army units currently deployed in Kyrgyzstan are there to protect military personnel and their families. These units will not be used for settling the situation in southern Kyrgyzstan. Additionally, Roza Otunbayeva formally asks Russia for help as Kyrgyz authorities are unable to contain the violence.⁸⁵ Several violent incidents are reported in the city of Jalal-Abad, where violence has now spread. These incidents include: A traffic police checkpoint where unidentified people have shot at cars leaving town; a military unit was attacked and lost its weapons, uniforms, and an armored personal carrier; and several fires at the Kyrgyz-Uzbek University and the neighborhood near it.⁸⁶ At the same time more special operation forces have arrived in Osh as violence continues.⁸⁷ An order is issued to Kyrgyz police to shoot to kill during the curfew hours.⁸⁸

June 13, 2010

Acting Defense Minister Ismail Isakov believes the participation of Russian troops could help in settling the unrest. He believes that "Russian servicemen will be neutral towards the participants in the conflict, and this very fact will help to stabilize the situation."⁸⁹ A large crowd gathered in Jalal-Abad and demanded that ethnic Uzbeks be moved out of the city and region. Such calls are

likely coming from provocateurs among the crowd.⁹⁰ The Uzbek Emergencies Ministry reported that over 75,000 ethnic Uzbeks refugees from the southern regions of Kyrgyzstan have crossed the border into Uzbekistan. Most of the refugees are women and children. Some have gunshot wounds. There are reception points for refugees in Andijon, Namangan, and Fergana.⁹¹ It is confirmed that the Russian military has reinforced its military contingent already in Kyrgyzstan (the Kant airbase) with the 31st Separate Air Assault Brigade of the Airborne Troops. This reinforcement was conducted to protect Russian service personnel and their families in Kyrgyzstan.⁹² OSCE Chairman, Kanat Saudabayev, sends a representative, Zhanybek Karibzhanov, to Kyrgyzstan. This is in addition to the UN and European Union (EU) sending humanitarian envoys.⁹³

June 14, 2010

Members of Kyrgyz human rights organizations hold a rally outside the UN House in Bishkek, asking for the UN to send peacekeepers.⁹⁴ The UN office in Bishkek urges the warring factions in southern Kyrgyzstan to stop the violence.⁹⁵ The UN High Commissioner for Human Rights urges local and national authorities to take action to protect citizens and curb the violence.⁹⁶ The UN Security Council holds a closed door consultation on the situation in Kyrgyzstan.⁹⁷ Kyrgyzstan's government refutes that they have sought U.S. military assistance to settle unrest in the southern regions. This was confirmed by head of the interim government Roza Otunbayeva.⁹⁸ An estimated 50,000 refugees are in the Suzak District (Jalal-Abad Province) seeking to flee Kyrgyzstan into Uzbekistan. They are mainly women with children and the elderly. Men 16 or over are not allowed near the border. They are reported to lack basic living conditions such as food and water.⁹⁹ The secretaries of the Security Councils of the CSTO member states met in Moscow and offered aid to Kyrgyz law enforcement agencies. CSTO Secretary-General said that "They have enough personnel, but lack equipment and hardware, helicopters, surface vehicles, supplies, and fuel."¹⁰⁰ Additionally, the secretaries issue a statement saying "The efforts of the Interim Government of the Kyrgyz Republic are as yet insufficient to stabilize the situation in the country."¹⁰¹ Russian President Medvedev announces that a (another) CSTO summit could be convened if the situation in Kyrgyzstan continues to worsen.¹⁰² OSCE Representative Zhanybek Karibzhanov meets with President Otunbayeva to discuss the situation in southern Kyrgyzstan.¹⁰³

June 15, 2010

The actual number of people killed during the violence in Osh and Jalal-Abad could be more than the official number, according to Roza Otunbayeva. She states that the exact number could be difficult to determine because many were buried within 24 hours and their deaths were not reported to authorities.¹⁰⁴ The CSTO plans to provide Kyrgyzstan's police with supplies to help stabilize the situation. The CSTO's position is that the gear must be non-lethal.¹⁰⁵ The UN Security Council condemns the violence in southern Kyrgyzstan, and calls for the restoration of the rule of law. The announcement comes after the council discussed the situation at an emergency meeting; council members support efforts to deliver aid to the region.¹⁰⁶ The President of the Security Council, Claude Heller, announces that the Security Council supports actions taken by UN officials and members of regional organizations for improving the situation in the region.¹⁰⁷ Roadblocks are set up in northern Kyrgyzstan in order to prevent violence from

spreading. Ten roadblocks are set up on the road to Bishkek and in other areas in the Chuy Province. The roadblocks are intended to prevent the transportation of firearms, according to Almazbek Atambayev.¹⁰⁸ Uzbekistan closes its border with Kyrgyzstan and is not able to accommodate additional refugees.¹⁰⁹ OSCE member states convene a special session of the Permanent Council in Vienna, urging ethnic Uzbeks and Kyrgyz to refrain from violence.¹¹⁰

June 16, 2010

The rioters in southern Kyrgyzstan use weapons stolen from security services during the violence in Osh, according to a spokesman for the Kyrgyz State National Security Committee. In the City of Osh, rioters stole Kalashnikov assault rifles, Makarov pistols, hunting rifles, Dragunov sniper rifles, and a large number of knives from security services. A number of these weapons were seized during the opposition-led uprising in the north of the country in April and brought to the south.¹¹¹ The night of the 15th-16th is relatively calm in Osh with only a few shooting incidents.¹¹² Curfew hours are reduced in the Jalal-Abad region by two hours.¹¹³ Sergei Lavrov, the Russian Foreign Minister, announces that the CSTO will help Kyrgyzstan to identify the instigators behind the unrest. The CSTO will also give material support and information to Kyrgyz law enforcement agencies, and this support will be given in accordance with the CSTO's charter documents.¹¹⁴ Additionally, Lavrov says that Russia bases its decision on sending peacekeepers to Kyrgyzstan exclusively on the valid norms of the CSTO. The 4th Article of the CSTO treaty says (military) actions of treaty participants (can happen) only in case of an aggression from a country or group of countries. The document also says that the decision on a peacekeeping operation in the territories of member-states is made by the Collective Security Council and from an official request from a member country for a peacekeeping mission in its territory.¹¹⁵ A spokesman for the International Committee for the Red Cross estimated that 'several hundred' people have been killed during the violence. President Otunbayeva said the number could be higher as many bodies were buried on the same day before sunset, according to Muslim tradition, and that the actual number may not be countable. Additionally, 75,000 ethnic Uzbeks refugees fled Kyrgyzstan into Uzbekistan and there are many more internally displaced civilians within Kyrgyzstan.¹¹⁶ The Kyrgyz interim government expresses gratitude to the Russia, partners in the CSTO, and other international organizations for support and aid. The statement said "We are grateful to our CSTO partners, and first of all Russia, who have understood our problems and made a decision to offer financial aid in overcoming the conflict and stabilizing the situation as well as render humanitarian aid." The statement also thanked the UN, countries of the SCO and EU, and the people and president of Uzbekistan, Islam Karimov.¹¹⁷

Aftermath

June 23, 2010

The OSCE Parliamentary Assembly announces that it is coordinating with the EU on the deployment of a police force in southern Kyrgyzstan. The projected force would not include "peacekeepers in military terms" but to offer technical advice.¹¹⁸

June 25, 2010

CSTO leaders visit Kyrgyzstan and reiterate that the organization will not send a peacekeeping force to the southern part of the country. Instead, they will send a provisional operational working group to Kyrgyzstan to help the country's security agencies. CSTO Secretary General Nikolay Bordyuzha will cooperate with and assist Kyrgyz security agencies.¹¹⁹ An evaluation mission from the police forces of the OSCE arrives in Kyrgyzstan. The mission members will extend the OSCE's consultative and expert support for a post-conflict settlement.¹²⁰

June 27, 2010

A referendum on the constitution passes, opening the way for a parliamentary democracy in Kyrgyzstan. The referendum would grant more power to a parliament and open the door for elections to take place later in the year.¹²¹ In the following weeks and months, many prominent parties campaign vigorously for a spot in parliament. A record 29 parties are registered, many of which are newly formed by prominent figures branching out on their own. There are no major incidents or allegations of unfairness during the campaign, which also saw the use of various social mediums to advertise parties' messages.¹²²

July 20, 2010

Kyrgyzstan's acting Defense Minister Ismail Isakov speaks out against OSCE plans to deploy a 52-member unarmed police force in Osh and Jalal-Abad. Isakov says that Kyrgyz and OSCE forces have totally different mentalities, laws, and levels of military training and that there are certain agreements within the framework of the CSTO and SCO.¹²³

July 22, 2010

The Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) meets and plans to send a police mission to southern Kyrgyzstan to prevent destabilization there. The OSCE mission will include 52 police and security personnel that will be tasked with building up the potential of Kyrgyz police. They will be unarmed and have no executive police powers, there are to monitor and consult police departments in the Osh and Jalal-Abad regions. Their deployment will be for fourth months, but no start date has been set pending final agreements with Kyrgyzstan's government.¹²⁴

July 23, 2010

A protest in Osh is held against the deployment of the OSCE police mission to the region. Protestors have gathered in the central square and state that they do not want their country to have the same fate as Serbia, in reference to the separation of Kosovo from Serbia.¹²⁵ The Kyrgyz Foreign Ministry states that the police mission will prevent various destructive forces from instigating new violence.¹²⁶

September 1, 2010

Talks on the deployment of OSCE police advisors will continue as President Otunbayeva and government members have said the country is interested in the help of the police group and not

refusing it. However, more specifications need to be worked out and the agreement will not be signed in its current form. There is a disagreement over long the police deployment will be.¹²⁷

October 5, 2010

Members of the political movement, named 34 (named after the article of Kyrgyz Constitution that guarantees freedom of assembly and protests), hold a protest at the OSCE building in Bishkek. Prior to the protest they circulate an official petition in support of the movement and then throw bags of dung at the OSCE building. The protestors were then arrested and taken away.¹²⁸

October 10, 2010

Parliamentary elections are held with five parties receiving the five percent minimum of votes needed to gain seats in parliament. The results: Ata Zhurt – 8.8 percent, a conservative party with a strong base in southern Kyrgyzstan, supports ousted president Bakiyev; Social Democratic Party of Kyrgyzstan – 8.04 percent, a center-left party, sometimes western leaning; Ar Namys – 7.74 percent, a conservative and pro-Russian party; Respublika – 7.24 percent, a recently formed party that stresses ethnic diversity in Kyrgyzstan; and Ata Meken – 5.6 percent, a liberal and pro-western party; all received the minimum to win parliament seats.¹²⁹

November 19, 2010

The Permanent Council of the OSCE agrees to adapt the deployment of police advisors to Kyrgyzstan. The announcement comes after consultations between OSCE police experts and the government of Kyrgyzstan. The deployment will become a new project to help Kyrgyzstan's Interior Ministry over a period of one year.¹³⁰

December 10, 2010

The CSTO held a summit in Moscow where members amended the organization's charter to allow the use of force in a situation like the violence in southern Kyrgyzstan; the decision to use force in a member state could happen, provided that there is a majority agreement among members and the member state in question agrees to an intervention. Uzbekistan did not sign any of the amendments.¹³¹

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