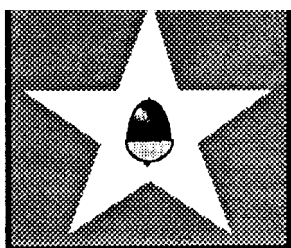


Conflict Studies Research Centre

Henry Plater-Zyberk

**Kyrgyzstan
Focusing on Security**

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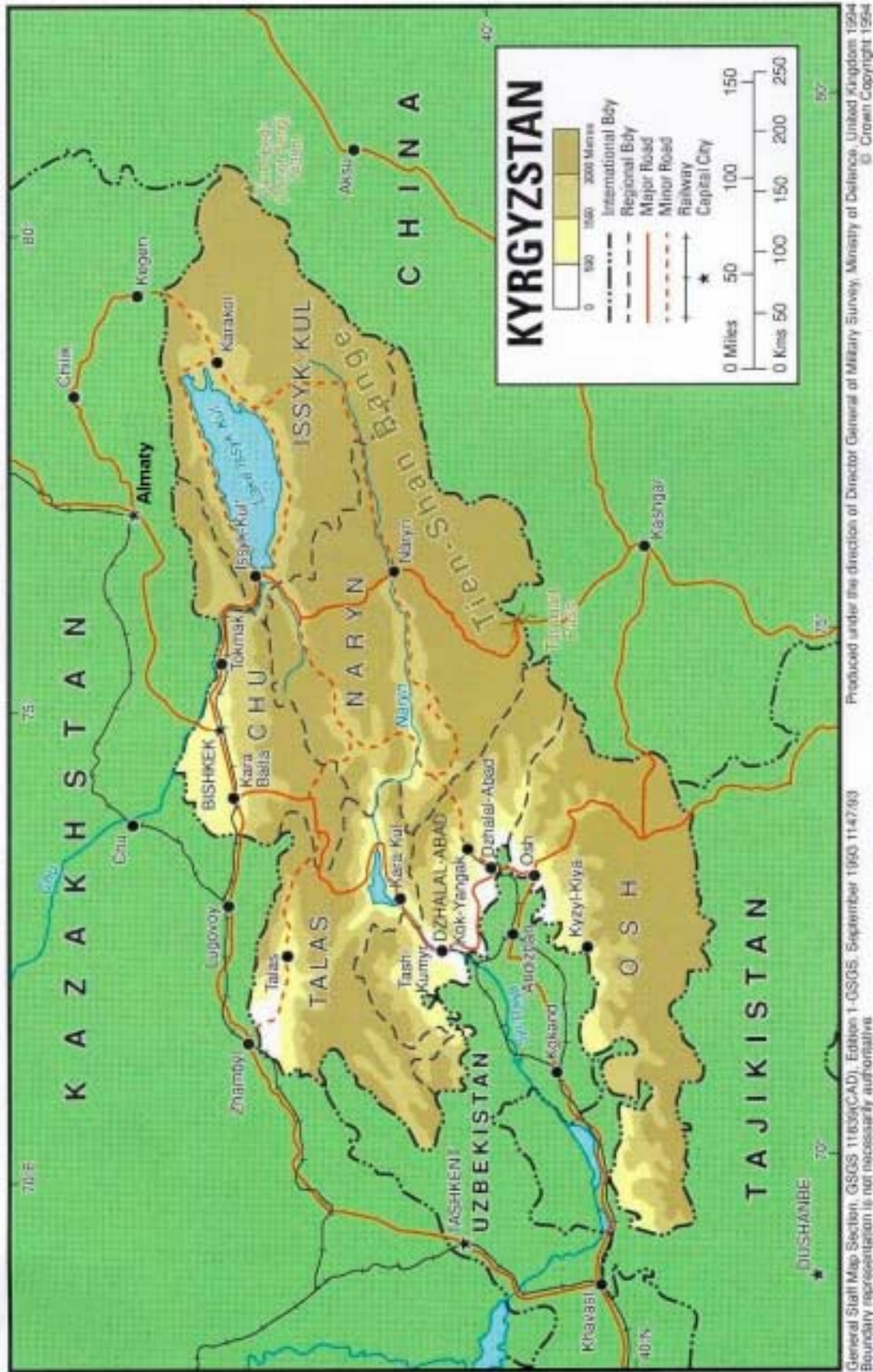
Kyrgyzstan - Focusing on Security

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Kyrgyzstan



Introduction: How to Become Switzerland?

Wedged between China, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan and Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan is a landlocked country, almost twice the size of the present Serbia and Montenegro with mountains covering 75% of its total land area and borders practically impossible to defend or control. Kyrgyzstan has the weakest armed forces in Central Asia and few natural resources. Its main assets are its natural beauty, coal, deposits of gold and precious metals and substantial water resources, the latter a rare commodity in the region.

In recent years Kyrgyzstan has been successfully courting the USA, Russia, China and several other industrialized countries, without upsetting any political suitors or provoking tension among them. The first stage of this qualified international success was due to the decisive policies of its leadership - Kyrgyzstan declared its independence from the Soviet Union on 31 August 1991, a week after a failed coup in Moscow - one of the first among the southern republics, and the reasonably early introduction of economic reforms.

President Akayev and his team faced several difficult tasks. Their landlocked country has small gas and oil deposits, it is not situated in a part of the world which big and powerful states were particularly interested in or, until recently, contemplated using as a launch pad for economic or military conquest.¹ Kyrgyzstan's best option was to become the Switzerland of Central Asia, and that meant quick economic reforms, the development of the banking sector and tourism. These policies have been to some degree successful, partly because Bishkek introduced genuine market reforms and partly because the other former Soviet Central Asian countries, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan, relied on their oil and gas deposits, or in the case of Tajikistan, were preoccupied with internal struggles. President Akayev, the only regional leader whose political career before 1991 was not in the local Communist Party apparatus, was not prepared to wait for the end of economic chaos in Russia.² Cooperation with Moscow was not an option. However, the economic slump after the break up of the Soviet Union was severe and Kyrgyzstan was hit by Russia's economic difficulties even as late as 1998.

In May 1993, under pressure from the IMF, Kyrgyzstan, one of the founder members of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), withdrew from the organization's rouble zone. This move complicated economic relations not only with Russia: Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan suspended trading with Kyrgyzstan. In September 1993, Kyrgyzstan rejoined the CIS economic union but refused to give up its own currency and in 1998 was the first CIS country to be accepted into the World Trade Organization.

However, the early and in some cases short lived economic successes were modest victories among the many challenges the leadership in Bishkek had to address. The potential investors, bankers and tourists expected long term economic reforms, social stability, internal security and territorial disputes resolved quickly and peacefully. There were also concerns that even with the regional borders delineated and demarcated to everyone's satisfaction, Kyrgyzstan's long and mountainous frontiers would be practically impossible to protect from regional criminals and extremists, attracted by its money laundering potential and comparatively tolerant political atmosphere.

The Kyrgyz authorities had, for the first few years of its independence, ignored the fact that it was quickly becoming a convenient transit route for drug smugglers

trying to pass their cargo to other countries in the region. The drug routes from Leninabad region in Tajikistan to the Kyrgyz Osh region were particularly popular. Kyrgyzstan, like all other Central Asian countries, has also been targeted by well-funded Islamic radicals. At the same time, larger and richer countries in the region began to benefit from their quickly growing oil and gas industries, and to stabilize politically and economically, thus attracting foreign investors, credits and loans. Bishkek had received throughout the 1990s substantial loans, credits and grants to which it became gradually addicted, without considering the need to plan for long term repayment. It expected to receive financial assistance simply because it was there. As the situation in the whole region became more stable, Kyrgyzstan ceased to be a prime investment opportunity. Foreign investment in Kyrgyzstan reached its peak in 1996, at \$348.4m, and began to decline rapidly two years later. By 1998 it had declined to \$136.3m and in 2001 to \$42.5m.³

The Political Climate

After thirteen years in power, President Akayev is still very popular with the electorate and would probably win the next presidential election, especially if, as in the past, his supporters fail to observe democratic electoral procedures, thus giving the genuinely popular leader an unfair advantage.⁴ Whether he decides to run is another matter. The constitutional court declared that it was lawful for president Akayev to run in the 2005 presidential election, but First Deputy Prime Minister Kurmanbek Osmonov announced in September 2002 that the president does not plan to do so.⁵ This could just be a pre-electoral teasing campaign. On the other hand, if in 2005, at the age of 61, President Akayev decides to retire, he would leave a dangerous political vacuum, which his opponents, kept away from all major decision making organs, often by methods not associated with liberal democracies, would be desperate to fill. This would create another vacuum as the vast network of President Akayev's supporters in the state administration would be removed and replaced by people with little or no experience. This process of rapid, large scale changes in the state administration, followed by similar changes at the district level, could lead to a second Kyrgyz revolution, possibly bloodless but nevertheless destabilizing as the state administration would inevitably be turned upside down. If, at the end of Askar Akayev's tenure, no significant economic improvements have been achieved, his successor may reach for more populist and radical methods. He would also be able to introduce fundamental reforms, thanks to the changes in the constitution proposed by Akayev and accepted in a national referendum on 2 February 2003, giving the president unlimited powers. The amended constitution expands presidential powers at the expense of the legislature.

The Global War on Terror enabled Kyrgyzstan's allies to turn a blind eye to Bishkek's administrative abuses and violations of human rights, which are admittedly less drastic than in many other countries in the region. Democracy in Kyrgyzstan is not helped by the fact that the opposition parties, and the parliament, regard the whole state administration as an alien body which should be replaced, not reformed, and show little interest in a methodical approach to judicial and administrative reforms. In their propaganda battles against the president they are often assisted by "Western" human rights organizations, which advocate not democracy but liberal democracy, unachievable at this stage, and who criticize, usually correctly, everything which falls short of these standards. Such human rights groups often ignore the history of the countries they operate in and the characteristics of their traditional decisionmaking processes, based on clan or ethnic affiliations. In their admirable quest they expect revolutionary rather than

evolutionary progress, leading towards instant positive changes and full respect for human rights. This occasionally leads them to support organizations which have been 'victimized' but whose programmes and policies are less democratic than the governments they oppose.

An attempt to improve human rights in Kyrgyzstan has indeed come from the man partly responsible for their violation, President Akayev. A presidential decree lists the measures taken to implement the national idea "Kyrgyzstan - a country of human rights" within the national human rights programme for the period 2003-2010.⁶ This belated decree is to be followed by a long-term nationwide campaign to educate the population about its rights and responsibilities. However, all these initiatives are bound to clash with the harsh interpretation of the present security requirements.

The Main Enemies: Poverty, Corruption, Radicalism & Drugs

In the post 11 September 2001 world in which Kyrgyzstan has successfully solved almost all of its border problems and established several security and military alliances, its main challenges are still the economy, the poverty of a large part of its population and the persistent, though currently contained, threat posed by Islamic radicalism in the region.

Between 1991 and 2000, 377,600 Russian speaking non-Kyrgyz left Kyrgyzstan. This represented a substantial part of the total population, assessed in March 1999 at 4.851m people.⁷ The outflow continued at the beginning of the new century. In 2000, 28,000 people left Kyrgyzstan, with 5,300 immigrating to Kyrgyzstan.⁸ The number of inhabitants of Kyrgyzstan wishing to emigrate to Russia in the same year was 43,588.⁹ This exodus of the non-Kyrgyz population was mainly due the disappearance of Moscow funded organizations and enterprises, the economic difficulties experienced by the republic and the priority given to Kyrgyz speakers in the state administration. The emigration of the Russian and other minorities was not forced by the Kyrgyz authorities.

In spite of emigration, due to the high birth rate the country's population reached 5.36m in 2003.¹⁰ The republic is thus slowly becoming monoethnic. The percentage of ethnic Kyrgyz in the population increased from 45% in 1991 to 64% in 2000.¹¹ There are significant minorities of Russians, Uzbeks, Ukrainians, Tatars and Uighurs.

Poverty

The foreign debt of Kyrgyzstan is still about \$1.5bn, according to Deputy Prime Minister Djoomart Otorbayev, standing at 95% of the country's GDP.¹² The average monthly wage in 2000, \$26, has increased in recent years insignificantly. About 50% of the total population live below the poverty line.¹³ The south is poorer than the urbanized north, although the greatest number of the poor live in the Naryn region, in the north of the country.¹⁴ Forty-two per cent of the Kyrgyz population is under 30 and most of them have difficulty finding regular jobs. They survive largely thanks to the overdeveloped grey economy.

The Kyrgyz leadership is aware of the resulting potential for socio-political problems. The office of the president includes, in its strategic plan for the development of Kyrgyzstan until 2010, a plan to reduce poverty between 2003-2005.¹⁵ The plan is more a strategic statement of intent than a detailed

programme, and it is difficult to imagine how poverty can be reduced without a more business friendly atmosphere and long-term job creation accompanied by a set of new liberal socio-political measures which the Kyrgyz government would be reluctant to introduce at this stage. In this respect, Bishkek may choose to learn from China rather than from the US or Europe, by working on security and stability and phasing in democratization in a strictly controlled process. The quick-fix solution of placating the poorer voters by creating artificial work places may bring short-term political advantages but will frighten off foreign investors.

The Kyrgyz government also plans to redistribute state farmland to 36,000 of its landless citizens. These bold measures carry socio-political risks and many MPs, especially the still powerful communist party deputies, have shown little enthusiasm for ratifying them.¹⁶ The 55% of the labour force employed at present in the agricultural sector will be pressured to become more efficient, more competitive and more market oriented. This in turn could increase unemployment in rural areas, creating new divisions in the agricultural communities, trigger emigration to the cities and radicalize the poor.

Corruption

The first stage of the programme aiming at eradication of poverty ends in 2005, the year of the next presidential election. The campaign has been slowed down by corruption, endemic in most state organizations and private enterprises. Unnamed foreign experts who polled 1,000 ordinary Kyrgyz families and 400 business leaders were told by 56% of them that bribery is part of everyday life; James Anderson from the World Bank said that Kyrgyzstan loses up to 70% of potential investment because of corruption.¹⁷ In January-June 2000, inspections conducted by Kyrgyz government auditors revealed financial irregularities in the national budget amounting to \$18.6m, that is approximately the equivalent of that year's defence budget and approximately 10% of budget revenues.¹⁸ President Akayev's battle with corruption is made difficult by his own nepotism and unwillingness to punish people close to him for incompetence and corruption, political tribalism in the capital and all seven administrative regions of the country, traditional acceptance of corrupt practices and the lack of mechanisms to fight them. In 1998, President Akayev issued a decree setting up the Main Directorate for Combating Economic Crime and Corruption at the Ministry of the Interior.¹⁹ Many state officials have been dismissed for corruption in the course of the last few years, but they are often replaced by people equally corrupt or incompetent.²⁰ In an attempt to improve efficiency, Prime Minister Kurmanbek Bakiyev announced in January 2002 the results of the first steps taken to reorganize government structures, which had doubled in size since the Soviet era.²¹ Seventy-two state departments and 157 sections were abolished, with corresponding staff cuts.²²

Radicalism

President Akayev has radicalized his political opponents by not ensuring that presidential and parliamentary elections are conducted in an absolutely fair and impartial manner and by not removing and punishing those in his administration guilty of human rights violations or breaking the law. The most glaring example of this was the case of several demonstrations which took place in Aksy, in Dzhalal-Abad region in March 2002. The demonstrators marched protesting electoral irregularities and in defence of the local MP Azimbek Beknazarov, arrested and charged with abuse of power in his previous position at the public prosecutor's office.²³ The event had strong political overtones and several supporters of Beknazarov began a well publicized hunger strike. On 17 March demonstrators began to throw stones at police, who answered by opening fire, killing 5 and

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wounding 24 (unconfirmed reports suggest that there were 34 people wounded). The police arrested 90 demonstrators during two further days of marches and riots.

The government mishandled the investigation of the riots in Aksy. It was thorough, but conducted by 17 investigators of the National Security Service (NSS), not an impartial organization. Not surprisingly, several members of the local community refused to cooperate with the investigation which had overtly a dual purpose: to determine the responsibility of the local officials and to uncover the perpetrators of unquestionably violent acts against the police.²⁴ Prime Minister Kurmanbek Bakiyev took the blame for the events in Aksy and resigned on 22 May 2002. Several local and state officials lost their positions, although most of them seem to have been transferred to other prestigious duties.

The trial of six regional police and interior department officials blamed for the killings in Aksy was postponed *sine die* when the relatives and supporters of the accused policemen staged a violent demonstration in October 2002.²⁵ The general attitude of the officials responsible for the shooting was probably best, although probably inadvertently, expressed by the former minister of interior Temirbek Akmataliyev, who said, when speaking before a parliamentary commission, that police used real bullets because the lack of funding did not allow them to buy proper riot equipment.²⁶

The periodical "Moya Stolitsa", published in Bishkek, reported in November 2002 that the broadcasts of Radio Liberty, which included comments on the Aksy events, were jammed in the Aksy region.²⁷ If this story is true it provokes the strange reflection that a heavily indebted country like Kyrgyzstan cannot afford riot control equipment, but can afford a jamming station and its running costs.

Another damaging aspect of the Aksy affair was that it distracted the attention of the world media and the Kyrgyz law enforcement organizations from real dangers of Islamic extremist organizations and drug smuggling. At a press conference with US Secretary of Defence Donald Rumsfeld which took place in Bishkek on 27 April 2002, President Akayev said that in 1999 and 2000 the southern part of Kyrgyzstan had been invaded by "thousands of terrorists and their gangs". In the campaign against them Kyrgyzstan lost 55 officers and soldiers.²⁸ By 2003, decimated by Kyrgyz and Uzbek troops, the Islamic radicals have no units which could threaten the Kyrgyz authorities but in a predominantly Islamic country the authorities still consider three groups of extremists to be particularly dangerous: Hizb al-Tahrir (Party of Liberation), The Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan, which according to head of the NSS Imankulov has been transformed into the Islamic Movement of Central Asia, and the East Turkestan Islamic Movement, an Uighur radical movement operating mainly in Eastern China and only sporadically active in Kyrgyzstan.²⁹ The claims by the head of the NSS that the Islamic radicals operating in Kyrgyzstan aim at setting up an Islamic caliphate in Central Asia have not been denied by these organizations, which are increasingly adept at listing the alleged violations of human rights by the Kyrgyz authorities but are less keen to talk about their own ambitions and the lack of transparency in their organizations.

Hizb al-Tahrir is said to have about 2,000 members in Kyrgyzstan, of which 1,500 are registered by the law enforcement agencies in Osh region.³⁰ The organization is mainly active in the south of the country³¹ and since 1999 has succeeded in recruiting in total more than 3,000 Kyrgyz, mostly young males.³² Its main potential power base, in southern Kyrgyzstan, is directly related to the economic problems of the region. In the uncompromising anti-terror war, in which armed

radical groups stand little long-term chance, Hizb al-Tahrir has adopted a new, subtle approach when operating in Kyrgyzstan, winning unexpected supporters among some Western human rights groups, which point out that Hizb al-Tahrir concentrates solely on propaganda. They fail to notice that it advocates violence, that its plans are purposefully vague, that it is not ready to explain what methods it wants to use to “liberate” the region and how democratic would be the system it is trying to impose.³³ The radicals have learned to operate on the edge of what in well organized industrialized liberal democracies would be tolerable behaviour. A group of Hizb al-Tahrir activists detained in Osh region in April 2003 distributed leaflets calling for war “against infidels” in Iraq. According to the security authorities in the region, the organization has become more active recently but has adopted a “no-contact” method when distributing its literature.³⁴

The Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan/Islamic Movement of Central Asia has not abandoned its ambition to bring about an Islamic Central Asia by violent means and does not pretend that it has changed its methods.

The campaign against the East Turkestan Islamic Movement will be driven mainly by the Chinese authorities. The Uighur radicals cannot count on hospitality in Kyrgyzstan, especially after a group of their activists was charged with bombing a minibus taxi in the city of Osh in 1998.³⁵ No one in Bishkek would consider upsetting China, a potential large scale investor and an important security partner. The 50,000 strong Uighur community in Kyrgyzstan³⁶ can expect to be carefully watched by closely cooperating security organizations on both sides of the border.

Like all other Central Asian states Kyrgyzstan scrutinizes and registers the religious organizations active in the country. Before 2002 the Kyrgyz authorities were aware of 125 religious organizations operating on their territory, of which only 23 had registered their existence.³⁷ The official registration of all religious organizations and individuals yields surprising results. Moslems represent in Kyrgyzstan 75% of the population.³⁸ Kyrgyzstan has a large number of Islamic organizations and 1,350 places of worship, of which 989 are mosques, 42 Islamic schools and seven other Islamic institutions. It has also 20 Christian organizations, with 938 foreign missionaries attempting to persuade the Kyrgyz to change their faith. There are 260 Christian facilities in Kyrgyzstan and 17 facilities of new religious groups.³⁹ By the beginning of 2002 nearly 30,000 Kyrgyz had adopted Christianity and this trend continues.⁴⁰ The Christians’ peaceful but persistent crusade and their successes are resented by the predominantly Moslem population. In the future the Kyrgyz Islamic organizations may put pressure on the government in Bishkek to limit the activities of foreign missionaries.

Counter-Terrorism & Drugs

The first nation to recognize the importance of Kyrgyzstan in combating international terrorism and drug smuggling was Russia. Russia’s leadership, particularly after Putin’s rise to power in 1999 was security conscious, the West was not willing to accept the international dimension of radical Islamic groups and had few important assets to protect in Kyrgyzstan. Russia trains members of the Kyrgyz security organizations. The Russian Federal Security Service (FSB) higher educational establishments are currently training and educating 15 Kyrgyz security officers and more than 60 cadets.⁴¹ A team from the FSB came to Bishkek to help investigate the attempt on the life of the secretary of the Kyrgyz Security Council and acting head of the presidential administration, Misir Ashirkulov, on 6 September 2002.⁴²

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The CIS anti terrorist centre, inspired and funded mainly by Moscow, was opened in Bishkek in 2001 and by 2002 the operations centre of what was soon to become the CIS Collective Security Treaty Organization was also in working order, though yet to be tested.⁴³

Beijing is particularly interested in cooperation with Bishkek to combat its Islamic extremists, to counterbalance the growing influence of Moscow and Washington in what it rightly considers to be its own, not their, backyard (though Moscow might choose to regard it as such) and to make Kyrgyzstan more attractive to Chinese investors.⁴⁴ In September 2002, China's Ministry of Public Security gave Kyrgyzstan's Ministry of the Interior 20 off-road vehicles and paid for their transportation and insurance.⁴⁵ In accordance with the wishes of the Chinese government the Kyrgyz authorities have also spent about \$250,000 of an \$1.8m grant given to them by Beijing on special equipment for the NSS.⁴⁶ In the last few years Kyrgyzstan has received more than \$6.5m in military assistance from China; twenty-six Kyrgyz officers have attended courses in Chinese military schools.⁴⁷

Chinese-Kyrgyz anti-terrorist manoeuvres took place in a region of the Batken district in autumn 2002. Kyrgyzstan committed to the exercise 60 border guards and five armoured vehicles. The Chinese contributed about 100 soldiers, 10 vehicles and several helicopters. The troops taking part in the exercise were to destroy a group of armed terrorists attempting to enter the Kyrgyzstan-Chinese border area.⁴⁸

As a result of perceived inadequacies, the Kyrgyz have recently begun to reform their power wielding organizations and to modernize their anti-terrorist units. They have established their own Border Guard Service with intelligence and security substructures and added to three special forces units (Pantera, Skorpion and Alfa) another detachment under the auspices of the National Guard.⁴⁹ In 2002 Kyrgyzstan reformed its Internal Troops. The new formations were established along administrative-territorial lines. Every unit includes a special purpose group called Sher (Lion).⁵⁰

A major task of the new security organizations and special units will be to combat jointly the growing drug trade in the whole region. Kyrgyzstan has reportedly 50,000 drug addicts.⁵¹ In 1999 the Kyrgyz law enforcement bodies confiscated 3,555kg and in 2000 5,370kg of drugs.⁵² In June 2000, at a meeting with judges, prosecutors, police executives, ministers and heads of local state administrations, President Akayev declared that the Kyrgyz law enforcement organizations were seizing only 10% of all drugs entering the country;⁵³ Kyrgyz authorities assess that 35 tonnes of drugs are transported through Kyrgyzstan annually.⁵⁴ With considerable help from foreign friends the Kyrgyz Drug Control Agency was set up in June 2003, two months after the creation of a similar agency had been announced in Moscow.⁵⁵

As a result of all these reforms and international linkages, in the space of two years Bishkek has become a major security centre in Central Asia, punching above its military and economic weight.

Looking for Security Partners

Relations between Moscow and Bishkek have been very good. However, those in Kyrgyzstan who sought Russian friendship and cooperation in the last decade of the century were sometimes disappointed by Moscow's incoherent foreign policy, corruption and the lack of vision of its leadership. The arrival in the Kremlin of Vladimir Putin changed the situation almost immediately. In July 2000 Askar Akayev and Vladimir Putin signed a declaration on eternal friendship and partnership between the two countries.⁵⁶ On 4 December 2001 the Kyrgyz Legislative Assembly accepted an amendment to the constitution making Russian, together with Kyrgyz, the official language of the country.⁵⁷ Defence Minister Esen Topoyev said in September 2002 that military cooperation with Russia is a priority and of strategic importance for Kyrgyzstan.⁵⁸ During an official visit to Moscow in September 2003 President Akayev said that for his country there is "no closer, dearer state than Russia" and added that "Russia was bestowed upon us by god and history".⁵⁹

Five hundred young Kyrgyz, funded from Bishkek, are currently studying in Russia.⁶⁰ Kyrgyzstan has a quota of places at the Diplomatic Academy of the Foreign Ministry of Russia and at the Moscow Institute of International Relations. The Russian Foreign Ministry helped to set up the information base of the Kyrgyz Foreign Ministry, including the archives and the library.⁶¹ The Russian Ministry of Atomic Energy is helping to improve frontier control with Tajikistan, probably by installing detectors of radioactive equipment. The Russians also offered to become involved in the uranium storage programme in the Kyrgyz enterprises in Orlovka, Kara-Balty, the Zhanar and Dastan plants⁶² and to help Kyrgyzstan to recultivate its old uranium dumps near the city of Mailu-Suu.⁶³

Militarily Russia never left Kyrgyzstan. It has had, for the last 30 years, a naval centre near the village of Kainda, for communicating with the Pacific Fleet⁶⁴ and the Ozero complex in Lake Issyk-Kul where the Russian navy tests its weapons.⁶⁵ Russian anti terrorist experts helped with campaigns against the attacks of radical Islamic groups in the Batken region in 1999-2000.⁶⁶ According to Kyrgyz Defence Minister Esen Topoyev, Russia delivered then almost \$1m worth of weapons and uniforms.⁶⁷ In the last 11 years about 700 Kyrgyz servicemen have been trained in Russia.⁶⁸

Throughout the 1990s Russia sought the support of the Central Asian states for the creation of an integrated regional air defence system. Moscow spoke frequently about the exposed air space of its southern flank through which unspecified enemies could fly in to attack Russia, and tried to convince the Central Asian states that a joint air defence system was in their own interests. This wisdom was partly accepted by some of the regional leaders and generals, most of whom still react positively to the bells ringing in the Kremlin. The Kyrgyz government was the most receptive among the southern former Soviet republics. They saw several advantages in air defence cooperation with Russia. Moscow was paying for most of the proposed joint programmes. It offered local air defence troops occasional training which the Kyrgyz could neither afford nor were equipped to conduct. No other country was ready even to consider air defence cooperation with Kyrgyzstan and the events in the Gulf and former Yugoslavia vividly showed the importance of an effective air defence system. Kyrgyzstan was in a unique and unenviable position in Central Asia. It was the only country without a viable air force. When in 1999 and 2000 Kyrgyzstan was attacked by large groups of well armed Islamic extremists it had to rely on Uzbek air support.

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Kyrgyzstan, a member of the Collective Security Treaty established in May 1992, thus became at the beginning of the new century an ardent supporter of its development. At the session of the Collective Security Council in May 2003 its status was upgraded, when the member states, Armenia, Belarus', Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Russia and Tajikistan, established the Collective Security Treaty Organization (acronym ODKB). The ODKB plans to base in Kyrgyzstan its rapid deployment force aiming at suppression of radical and criminal groups operating in the region. The Central Asian Collective Rapid Deployment Force consists of five battalions, each provided by a member states (Russia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Armenia). Belarus' declined to send its troops for legal reasons, but has offered its military equipment. The total strength of the force is expected to be 10,000. The national units are stationed in their countries, ready to be deployed at short notice.⁶⁹ Between 23-26 September 2003, manoeuvres of the collective rapid deployment forces were held in Kyrgyzstan. They were commanded by Russian General Sergey Chernomordin, the officers of the General Staff of the Kyrgyz armed forces and CIS antiterrorist officials. The manoeuvres aimed at suppression of armed bands operating on Kyrgyz territory.⁷⁰

It was President Akayev's initiative to invite the Russian air force to set up its base in Kant near the Kyrgyz capital.⁷¹ The Kant air base, the first Russian new military base on foreign soil since the dissolution of the USSR, benefits both countries militarily and politically, with Bishkek drawing direct and indirect economic benefits from the cooperation.⁷² By mid 2002 Russia had modernized the Kyrgyz air defence system with equipment worth about 7.6m roubles,⁷³ and by the time it officially opened the airbase in 2003 Russia had spent about 100m roubles modernizing it.⁷⁴ The Russian air force unit based in Kant will be used for air surveillance and suppression of armed Islamic radicals and drug smuggling groups. The Russian air contingent can also be used as support for the ODKB rapid deployment troops if required.

Russia has a 25 year lease on the base.⁷⁵ On 23 October 2003, at the time of the official opening of the base, there were five SU-27, five SU-25, one AN-24, six Il-76, one Il-18, four L-39, one An-12 and two Mi-8 helicopters based in Kant. The number of servicemen stationed at the base is to be increased from the present 400 to 500. The base will also employ about 100 civilians. Kant is expected to become a permanent base for 10-15 SU-27 and SU-25 and several transport aircraft and helicopters. Until the end of 2003, the base will be funded from the Russian Defence Ministry budget. From 2004, Kant will receive money from the Russian National Defence budget, which is outside the annual Ministry of Defence expenditure. The base has no legal limitations as to the types and number of aircraft which it is allowed to handle at any given time and the Kyrgyz have only nominal control over the base operations. Their quantity and missions will be determined by tasks at hand.⁷⁶ Colonel Andrey Samotsvet is the first commander of the Kant air base.⁷⁷ The base will house temporarily a large contingent of Russia's ground forces troops for the Russian and Kyrgyz joint manoeuvres planned for 2004 on Kyrgyz soil.⁷⁸

The basing at Kant of one Il-18 aircraft suggests that the Russians are looking seriously at air reconnaissance operations. The presence of the Russian air force in Kyrgyzstan will have a sobering effect on any country contemplating overflying the until recently undefended Kyrgyz airspace without Bishkek's permission, or conducting hot pursuit operations across the Kyrgyz border in an attempt to catch real or imaginary groups of extremists or drug smugglers. Russia's military presence is a warning to other Central Asian countries not to attempt to resolve any

disagreements with a militarily weak Kyrgyzstan through force of arms. It is also a very convenient stopover and stable base for the regular Russian military flights to Tajikistan.

Among many advantages of military cooperation with Russia, such as compatible equipment, a common language, the educational background of commanders and NCOs and similar procedures, is Moscow's unwillingness to interfere in human rights issues in other countries. Moscow has no reason to believe that Russian organizations or political parties will try to force it to comment or to react to reports on the human rights shortcomings of its military allies, whereas the US and other NATO members may feel obliged to issue defensive statements or even reconsider their policies vis à vis any country accused of such abuses.

The US has been providing Kyrgyzstan with economic assistance for more than a decade. Between 1992 and 2002 the US gave Kyrgyzstan \$590.7m in grants, educational and training programmes and equipment. US financial assistance to Bishkek in 2002 was \$49.9m.⁷⁹ Washington gave financial and material assistance to strengthen the Kyrgyz borders worth \$80m, including 26 off-road vehicles.⁸⁰ The US Army also helped to set up an NCO school based on the Koy-Tash Brigade near Bishkek. The school's first intake in 2002 was expected to be about 100 recruits.⁸¹ The US are said to be spending \$60m on a military base in Sokuluk, which by any standards is a major expenditure for what was originally claimed to be a short-term humanitarian and logistical support task force for Operation Enduring Freedom.⁸²

The US military had begun to show a serious interest in cooperation with the Kyrgyz armed forces in 1995. At that time the Kyrgyz were not ready for it, as many senior Kyrgyz officers wanted to re-establish closer contacts with Russia and were wary of Washington's strong links with Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan. After 11 September 2001, Washington and Bishkek saw new opportunities in defence and security cooperation and fighting what suddenly became the common enemy, terrorism. The USA set up a base in Manas, near the Kyrgyz capital. The Manas air base was not the US' first choice. A large former Soviet air base at Kulyab in Tajikistan, less than 150km from the Afghan border, was rejected because it was in poor condition and its reconstruction, maintenance and security would have been too expensive.⁸³ Recognizing defence, political and economic opportunities, President Akayev and the Kyrgyz parliament authorized the stationing of troops from the USA, Australia, Canada, Denmark, France, Italy, the Netherlands, Norway, Poland, South Korea, Spain and Turkey at Manas.⁸⁴ The Manas airbase housed in mid 2002, 12 Hornet, 6 Mirage 2000D, air tankers, transport aircraft and 1,800 troops from several countries.⁸⁵ The stationing of foreign troops in Manas has been highly profitable and a good job-creating scheme. From December 2001 to August 2002 the coalition forces made 3,171 operational sorties, for which they paid the Kyrgyz government \$5.2m, in addition to \$1m for leasing the 37 hectares of the base. The money received from the allies has been channelled into modernizing other smaller airports.⁸⁶

France has been another important contributor to the development of the Manas base and the Kyrgyz economy. Anxious not to be left out, the French contributed 6 Mirage 2000D to the coalition forces. Between January-October 2002, they spent \$9m in payment for airport facilities, individual sorties and goods delivered by local suppliers.⁸⁷

The biggest beneficiary of the multinational military deployment in Kyrgyzstan was the Kyrgyz Army. Norway supplied Kyrgyzstan with 13 tonnes of non-combat

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military equipment.⁸⁸ The German Ministry of Defence gave the Kyrgyz medical equipment, non-combat military equipment and several dozen Kyrgyz officers were offered places at German military schools.⁸⁹ 339 Kyrgyz servicemen, including 55 officers and 24 NCOs, have been trained by Turkish instructors between 2000 and 2002 in mountain warfare, field engineering, topography, weapons handling and marksmanship and 122 Kyrgyz servicemen studied at the NATO PfP Centre in Ankara.⁹⁰ Kyrgyzstan joined the North Atlantic Cooperation Council in 1992 and two years later joined the PfP programme. Kyrgyzstan has participated in about 100 PfP activities to date.⁹¹ Several smaller countries have also offered Kyrgyzstan non-combat military equipment.

The Kyrgyz government was briefly hesitant about its support for the war in Iraq. It even authorized two anti-war demonstrations and did not object to a Bishkek newspaper organizing an anti-war campaign,⁹² but the unexpected and swift victory of the coalition forces in Iraq changed the attitude of the Kyrgyz leadership.

The Kyrgyz Army

Kyrgyzstan has the smallest army in Central Asia, originally based on two Soviet Army units left in the country after Kyrgyzstan's declaration of independence. In 1992, Kyrgyzstan set up the State Defence Committee. Its head was Major General Janybek Umetaliyev. In 1993 the committee was incorporated into the new Kyrgyz Defence Ministry. Major General Myrzakan Subanov became the first defence minister. Three Kyrgyz colonels appointed as first deputy ministers were promoted to Major Generals in 1994.⁹³ Until the establishment in 2002 of the separate border service, the Kyrgyz Army had 12,000 servicemen. (The new border guard service was allocated 4,000 servicemen from the Ministry of Defence and 1,000 servicemen and civilians from the National Security Service.) Kyrgyzstan has no combat aircraft, although one or two of its L-39 trainers could in theory be used for ground attack operations.⁹⁴ The Defence Ministry budget for 2003 is \$15m.⁹⁵ This equals the total annual foreign military assistance given to Kyrgyzstan.⁹⁶

The first years were difficult for the Kyrgyz Army, partly because it had to develop from very little, partly because potential military partners were primarily interested in the larger countries in the region, and partly because senior Kyrgyz officers wanted to cooperate mainly with Russia and in the 1990s this was not a realistic option. The first Kyrgyz Defence Minister Subanov, the present Defence Minister Esen Topoyev and the second Kyrgyz Chief of the General Staff supported closer links with the Russian Armed Forces. The first Chief of the Kyrgyz General Staff General Ismail Isakov advocated closer contacts with the US Army and was sent as a "reward" to study at the Russian General Staff Academy.⁹⁷ Colonel General Subanov was replaced in 1999, when a group of fighters of the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan captured three high-ranking army and national security officers. One of the hostages was the head of the Intelligence department of the Kyrgyz MOD. The Kyrgyz government paid \$50,000 ransom for the three officers. In the ensuing anti-terrorist campaign the Ministry of Defence failed to catch the kidnappers, although Minister Subanov announced that the antiterrorist operation against them was a success. The terrorists came back, kidnapping the Interior Ministry General Anarbek Shamkeyev and four Japanese geologists. Subanov and his First Deputy Isakov were dismissed.

He was replaced by Major General Esen Topoyev.⁹⁸ General Topoyev removed Subanov's men from the ministry and promoted several of "his own" colonels to

important posts. They were promoted to Major General after a successful anti-terrorist campaign in 2000. By mid 2003, Kyrgyzstan had one colonel general and six major generals. Of this small number, one has been charged with embezzlement and moved out of the ministry; one is the Kyrgyz representative in US CENTCOM in Florida; and one is on attachment to the CIS Collective Security Treaty organization.⁹⁹

In addition to several special forces units belonging to the main power organizations in Kyrgyzstan, the Ministry of Defence has at its disposal a rapid reaction brigade based near Bishkek. A regiment-size unit had been transferred to Kyrgyzstan's Koy-Tash in 1967 from Estonia; it has been transformed into a rapid reaction brigade.¹⁰⁰

The Ministry of Defence trains military and security personnel for other national bodies responsible for defence, security and law enforcement duties. The July 2003 graduation from the Kyrgyz Ministry of Defence Higher Military School produced 158 officers, of whom 60 were to serve in the armed forces and the rest in other national power structures. Since 1956 the school had been the Soviet Air Force training centre for air force pilots from developing countries. Its equipment was sold by Kyrgyzstan to Uzbekistan when the two countries became independent. Since independence the new multiservice Kyrgyz MOD school has trained and educated 786 graduates.¹⁰¹

The only commodity the Kyrgyz armed formations are not short of is conscripts. Every year the number of men reaching conscription age exceeds by several times the number the army is able to absorb. The autumn 2002 call up netted 3,000 young men into the power ministries. Seven thousand people were called up to perform alternative service.¹⁰² The Kyrgyz army, helped by its growing number of allies and increasingly appreciative political leadership, is developing its fighting capabilities, but the main organizations keeping Kyrgyzstan's enemies on the run are the border guards and the National Security Service. Kyrgyzstan established its State Border Guard Service on 1 October 2002 with nine generals' posts. The National Security Service border directorate and Defence Ministry main border service have been merged into a single body. The head of the new organization is appointed by the president. The border troops number about 5,000 people.¹⁰³

Kyrgyzstan's Borders

To agree on common borders with its neighbours was at the top of the priority list of the Kyrgyz leadership. Kyrgyzstan has an 858 km border with China, 1,051 km with Kazakhstan, 870 km with Tajikistan, and 1,099 km with Uzbekistan. Only the border with China was demarcated; it was guarded until 1999 by Russian border troops. The Chinese disputed the legality of that border. The border between China and the Russian Empire, to which the territories of the present Kyrgyzstan belonged, was regulated by four treaties and protocols signed in the second half of the 19th century. The description of the borders was vague.¹⁰⁴ This resulted in two borders: one legal and on paper only, and the other factual, guarded jealously by both sides.¹⁰⁵ Border talks between the USSR and China started in 1964 and identified 25 disputed areas, five of which, covering 3,750 sq km, were in the Kyrgyz Soviet Socialist Republic. Only in 1987 did both sides reach an agreement on delineation of the borders. The principles of the agreement were accepted at the Soviet-Chinese Summit in 1989 and were recognized by Kyrgyzstan and China when President Akayev visited Beijing three years later. After four years of further

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negotiations during which both sides made territorial concessions, President Akayev and Chairman Jiang Zemin signed a bilateral border agreement.¹⁰⁶ The agreement was ratified by both sides in April 1998 and by mid 2001, 60% of the borders covered by the agreement had been delineated. The rest was to be completed by 2003. The lingering disagreements over the area described as “to the west of the Bedel Pass” were solved by the Additional Agreement signed on 26 August 1999 and subsequently ratified by the parliaments of both countries.¹⁰⁷

A strong lobby in the Kyrgyz parliament was against the ratification of any Kyrgyz-Chinese border agreement which made Bishkek transfer, according to the critics, 87,000 hectares of land to China.¹⁰⁸ The protest appeared to be a planned attempt to distort the facts and to demand President Akayev’s resignation. The parliamentarians who argued against the border agreement with China, saying that all changes concerning national territories must have their approval, failed to address the argument that the disputed areas were never legally Kyrgyz. President Akayev was therefore entitled to approve the transfer of that land to China. His position was supported by Kyrgyzstan’s constitutional court.

With no major problems on the Kazakh-Kyrgyz border, Bishkek is preoccupied with frequent border disagreements with Uzbekistan and occasional flare-ups on the border with Tajikistan, usually based on procedural disagreements. A mini border dispute between Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan occurred in August 2002 as a result of a disagreement about a new Tajik customs checkpoint on the Isfara River. The decision to establish the checkpoint had not been authorized by Dushanbe. The local Kyrgyz authorities reacted swiftly and aggressively, but without coordinating their action with Bishkek. The dispute escalated to grotesque proportion with both sides disrupting traffic across the common border in the two border regions.¹⁰⁹ Tajik-Kyrgyz border issues like this are not addressed with sufficient determination by the two countries, put off by costs, lack of expertise and protests by ethnic minorities on both sides of the border.

Like most of the Kyrgyz borders, the Uzbek section is the result of Soviet-era border demarcation. These internal administrative borders were of little importance or relevance to either community. Uzbek-Kyrgyz talks on the border issues are driven mainly by the Uzbek side, which has committed important resources and expertise to the process. The Kyrgyz side shows less interest in a professional approach to the talks.¹¹⁰ In August 2003, seven years after signing an agreement on eternal friendship, Uzbek and Kyrgyz officials met in Tashkent, to sign a final protocol on the measures necessary for the completion of delineation of the state borders.¹¹¹

The post-independence border problem can be solved through territorial exchanges, a process opposed by local pressure groups facing economic hardship as a result of border readjustments. The two countries have still to agree on more than 39 disputed border areas, of which seven are regarded as especially difficult. Kyrgyz MP Ismail Isakov claimed in August 2002 that there were still as many as 140 disputed border areas with Uzbekistan and 70 with Tajikistan.¹¹² The “enclave bargaining” between Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan may in the future provoke serious discords between the two countries. The population of Uzbekistan is four times bigger than Kyrgyzstan’s and the 300-350,000 strong Uzbek diaspora in Kyrgyzstan represents a powerful lobby, especially in the disputed border regions and enclaves.

The Kyrgyz are less interested in border controls, as they profit from their decentralized economy and smuggling from and to Uzbekistan. Tashkent is also more determined to stamp out radical Islamic groups, blaming Bishkek for sloppy

border control. Bishkek in turn accuses Tashkent of placing land mines on both sides of the border on which the two countries are yet to agree and shooting at smugglers inside Kyrgyz territory. The Kyrgyz complain that between 1999 and 2002 there were 10 cases of people being blown up by Uzbek mines, which in some cases were placed up to 250m inside Kyrgyzstan.¹¹³ Uzbekistan has so far failed to keep its promise to provide Kyrgyzstan with maps of the minefields it laid along the common border.

In September 2001, Kyrgyz parliamentary deputies rejected an Uzbek-Kyrgyz military cooperation agreement, claiming that it gave the Uzbeks the right to march across the border without prior approval from Bishkek.¹¹⁴ The deputies were concerned because in 1999 the Uzbeks bombed, by mistake, in a hot pursuit operation, a Kyrgyz village and later mined the Kyrgyz side of the border in the Batken region without coordinating their actions with Bishkek. The Kyrgyz deputies argue that with a vocal Uzbek majority in three enclaves in Kyrgyzstan and given Tashkent's assertive foreign policy, the Uzbek army may in the future be used to support Uzbek interests in Kyrgyzstan.¹¹⁵ The military of both countries still work together on the basis of their first military cooperation agreement signed in 1996, and within the framework of the Shanghai Cooperation. Organization.

Divided by Water

Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan have more than 80% of Central Asia's water resources and that is whence the Uzbeks and the Kazakhs take 80% of their water supplies, paying very little for it and sometimes avoiding payments altogether. The two providers supply water mainly for irrigation purposes, lowering the water level in their storage reservoirs and reducing energy production for their own consumption in the winter. A switch to energy supply from irrigation supply would bring them substantial economic benefits but also animosity from Astana and Tashkent, especially since between 1991 and 2001 the water demand in Central Asia has increased by 25%.¹¹⁶ Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan have not so far been able to coordinate their water policy, which has allowed the water consumers to maintain the status quo, to their economic advantage.

On 18 February 1992 the five Central Asian republics signed an agreement on joint management of the use and protection of the region's water resources, giving Tashkent and Astana the right to interfere in the two smaller countries' water resources, without bearing sufficient financial responsibility for the maintenance of the reservoirs or channels.¹¹⁷ Kyrgyzstan argues today that the agreement is not legally binding because it was signed by a minister without appropriate plenipotentiary powers. The Interstate Coordinating Water Commission, which decides on the use of water resources, demands from Kyrgyzstan a supply of water which Bishkek regards as detrimental to its economy. Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan use the Kyrgyz water resources but refuse to discuss the costs of water storage. The pay-as-you-use method would be much more convenient for the Kyrgyz but is not acceptable to Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan. Both use the old Soviet argument that the water reservoirs were built jointly by all Soviet republics, to which Kyrgyzstan is entitled to respond that all the decisions were taken in Moscow without any attention paid to the wishes of the local people. The argument that water cannot be regarded as a commercial commodity as it is necessary for human survival provokes questions about the price of water used for purely commercial activities.

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The agreements signed between Kyrgyzstan and its two larger neighbours on water supply were either based on barter or local short-term payments. The barter agreements, trading oil and gas for water, have many legal loopholes and provoke tit for tat cuts of supplies; the decisions are taken usually by local officials or company directors. In 2000, Kyrgyzstan asked Kazakhstan for coal to be sent to northern Kyrgyzstan in the winter as compensation for the maintenance of the reservoirs on the Syr Darya river. When Kazakhstan refused, the Kyrgyz closed the reservoirs. The Kazakhs paid up instantly.¹¹⁸

Kyrgyzstan's water reserves could thus be a powerful "weapons". President Akayev acknowledged the importance of his country's water resources in his decree of 6 October 1997 on foreign policy and water resources, reserving Kyrgyzstan's right to gain maximum profit from its water.¹¹⁹ On 23 July 2001, President Akayev signed the law "On the inter-state use of water resources and water facilities in the Kyrgyz Republic". Kazakhstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan are expected to pay \$14.8m annually for Kyrgyz water.¹²⁰ Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan are now seeking cooperative maintenance of water resources, something which they have until recently been trying to avoid or postpone indefinitely. In the spring and summer seasons, the Uzbek part of Ferghana Valley depends entirely on Kyrgyz water reservoirs but Kyrgyzstan produces only about 25% of the energy it consumes¹²¹ and is therefore afraid that if it insists on fair payment for its water, Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan will cut their gas and oil supplies to its economically vulnerable areas. This is why Bishkek still accepts short term, "tactical" water agreements which suit its larger neighbours. In November 2002 Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan signed another agreement with Kyrgyzstan on water resources. The agreement should solve problems in the Kazakh Makhtaraal district which grows almost all the country's cotton, although the Kazakh farms still owe the Kyrgyz water supplier \$115,131 for the water supplied in 1997.¹²²

Conclusion

Twelve years after declaring its independence from the USSR, Kyrgyzstan has had many successes but still faces many old and new challenges. The Kyrgyz leadership has succeeded in preserving ethnic unity, has been conducting a mature and pragmatic foreign policy, contributing to the stability of the region. It has rejected the Soviet legacy of religious intolerance and a mono-party political system. The challenges it faces are: democratic improvements to its political system - still in an embryonic state; reducing its dependence on loans and foreign financial assistance - Kyrgyzstan was expected to make \$100m foreign debt repayments in 2003, more than 40% of budget revenue;¹²³ and in addition, streamlining the government and making it more accountable and efficient.

The growing international contacts and prosperity of some branches of the Kyrgyz economy have resulted in the growth of economic crime. The head of the Economic Security Directorate of the NSS said in December 2002 that economic crime in banking and foreign economic activity was growing.¹²⁴ To deal with this will require new legal reforms and modernization of law and order organizations appropriate to the local conditions.

The magnitude and the scope of these challenges could tempt President Akayev to stay on and run in the next presidential election. This would extend the uneasy period of stability, criticized by his opponents and human rights organizations but acceptable to Kyrgyzstan's neighbours and international partners. If he really has

decided to step down he may need to consider starting to prepare his successor and a new national political party now.

Kyrgyzstan's relations with large "players" increasingly active in the region ranges from good to excellent, but border and economic disagreements with some of its neighbours still have to be ironed out. Kyrgyzstan's most powerful neighbour, positively disposed China, will reconsider its friendly policies towards Bishkek only if a future Kyrgyz leadership begins to question their legality or tolerate on its territory organizations which China regards as hostile to its interests. Beijing may also become concerned if the flights from Manas or Kant become too inquisitive, setting off alarms in the Chinese air defence systems; or if new listening centres, either Russian or American, begin to appear on Kyrgyz soil.

The Russians are likely to stay in Kyrgyzstan, because that is in the interest of both governments. No-one in Russia is prepared to debate what is the real benefit of the Kant airbase, or its costs. The US military presence in Kyrgyzstan will depend on the situation in Afghanistan, the outcome of the conflict in Iraq, and on the next Kyrgyz and US presidential elections. Considering the economic and military benefits, any future leadership in Bishkek would hesitate to ask the US military to leave, although that would please both Moscow and Beijing. The departure of the US troops would automatically mean a withdrawal of other international units based in Manas and corresponding economic losses. Even if a US administration decides to scale down or withdraw its military contingent from Kyrgyzstan, it will probably still assist Bishkek in combating armed radicals and drug smuggling, the two threats uniting all the states with interests in the area.

Bishkek can count on regional and distant allies as long as it pursues a pragmatic foreign policy and maintains its internal stability. Already housing the HQs of the antiterrorist bodies of the CIS and the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, Bishkek could become a international antiterrorist and conflict resolution centre irrespective of the number of foreign units deployed on its soil. Its consistent policy of aiming at becoming the antiterrorist centre of Central Asia will succeed only if it is capable of protecting the economic and security interest of its powerful partners on its soil, and if it aspires to more than just being a landlord of military bases and security centres. Kyrgyzstan has to learn from all its partners and develop its political, diplomatic, and judicial bodies, and its information gathering and special forces networks, to make them fully operational with their international counterparts if it wishes to become a regional security broker with conflict resolution and conflict prevention capabilities. Bishkek will also have to finalize its border agreements with Uzbekistan and Tajikistan and address the issue of ethnic enclaves on both sides of its borders.

For this to succeed, it has to be, and be seen, as an efficient, tough but tolerant country without ethnic or border problems. This, however, is a task more complex, and demanding more planning and coordination of the Kyrgyz administrative bodies, than a simple readiness to rent military bases.

ENDNOTES

- ¹ In 2002 Kyrgyzstan produced only 730,000 barrels of oil (*Oil and Gas Journal*, 23 December 2002, pp113-115). Kyrgyz domestic gas production declined from 3.5 billion cubic feet (bcf) in 1992 to 0.5 bcf in 2000, with the domestic consumption requirements of that year 67.5 bcf (Information Energy Administration, www.eia.doe.gov).
- ² President Akayev's membership of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (the CPSU) has been downplayed by his supporters. He was in the 1980s the Chairman of the Kyrgyz Academy of Science, a position requiring active and enthusiastic support for CPSU policies.
- ³ 'Political development of Kyrgyzstan: Stability and Instability', *Central Asia and the Caucasus*, April 2003, p174.
- ⁴ According to Kyrgyz opposition and international observers the 2000 elections were marred by irregularities perpetrated by President Akayev's supporters.
- ⁵ *Kabar*, 20 September 2002, FBIS.
- ⁶ *Slovo Kyrgyzstana*, 16 May 2003.
- ⁷ *The Times of Central Asia*, 11 January 2001 and 17 May 2001.
- ⁸ *The Times of Central Asia*, 17 May 2001.
- ⁹ The Russian Embassy in Bishkek, quoted in *The Times of Central Asia*, 19 July 2001.
- ¹⁰ *The Times of Central Asia*, 30 July 2003, Internet version.
- ¹¹ André et Jean Sellier, Atlas des peuples d'orient, (La Decouverte, 2000), p160, *The Times of Central Asia*, 11 January 2001.
- ¹² *The Times of Central Asia*, 14 December 2000 and 29 May 2003; *Krasnaya Zvezda*, 5 December 2002.
- ¹³ *The CIA Factbook 2003*, Internet version. The poverty percentage provided in CIA and World Bank publications is high because it is based on the old (1998) figures for the total population of Kyrgyzstan.
- ¹⁴ *The Times of Central Asia*, 26 December 2002.
- ¹⁵ Presidential Decree, 18 April 2003; *Slovo Kyrgyzstana*, 22 May 2003, Internet version.
- ¹⁶ Kyrgyz Radio 1 in Russian, 2 February 2003, FBIS.
- ¹⁷ *The Times of Central Asia*, 6 March 2001.
- ¹⁸ *The Times of Central Asia*, 10 August 2000 and *The CIA Factbook 2000*.
- ¹⁹ 'Political development of Kyrgyzstan: Stability and Instability', *Central Asia and the Caucasus*, 30 April 2003, p177.
- ²⁰ In the first half of 2001, 1,257 state officials were dismissed from the state administration bodies and further dismissals have since been announced. *Vechernyy Bishkek*, 15 June 2001.
- ²¹ *The Times of Central Asia*, 14 December 2000.
- ²² Kyrgyz Radio 1, 24 January 2002, BBC Monitoring Service (MS).
- ²³ Pyramid TV, 14 November 2002, FBIS.
- ²⁴ *Kabar*, 4 June and 24 July 2002, BBC MS. The Kyrgyz National Security Service deputy head Boris Poluyektov said in September 2002 that the rallies in Kyrgyzstan were organized according to the "Tajik scenario" used by the Tajik opposition in the early 1990s which resulted in many deaths and injuries. Legitimate rallies are joined by small groups of radicals who then provoke violent acts (Pyramid TV, 9 September 2002, FBIS).
- ²⁵ *Human Rights Watch 2002 Report on Kyrgyzstan*, www.hrw.org; *Vechernyy Bishkek*, 1 October 2002, FBIS.
- ²⁶ *The Times of Central Asia*, 13 March 2003 and 2 May 2003 and Reporters Without Borders, *Kyrgyzstan Annual Report 2003*, www.rsf.org.
- ²⁷ *Moya Stolitsa*, Bishkek, 28 November 2002, FBIS.
- ²⁸ *The Times of Central Asia*, 2 May 2002.
- ²⁹ *Vechernyy Bishkek*, 10 September 2002, BBC MS; *Kabar*, 5 September 2002, BBC MS.
- ³⁰ *Vechernyy Bishkek*, 10 January 2002, BBC MS.
- ³¹ *Argumenty I Fakty*, 18 September 2002, FBIS.
- ³² *The Times of Central Asia*, 22 August 2002.
- ³³ *Human Rights Watch 2002 Report on Kyrgyzstan*.

- 34 *Kabar*, 4 April 2003, FBIS.
- 35 *The Times of Central Asia*, 14 August 2003. Sporadic terrorist attacks continued throughout 2002 and 2003. Bombs exploded in Kyrgyzstan in December 2002, May 2003 and June 2003. In June 2003 the Kyrgyz NSS found a large arms and ammunition depot near Itez, 160 km from Batken. The Kyrgyz authorities claimed that the depot belonged to the IMU and was left by the group in 2000. ITAR-TASS, 23 June 2003.
- 36 *The Times of Central Asia*, 22 August 2002.
- 37 *Litsa*, Bishkek, 13 August 2002, BBC MS.
- 38 *CIA Factbook 2003*.
- 39 *The Times of Central Asia*, 16 January 2003; AKIpress, 27 December 2002, FBIS.
- 40 *The Times of Central Asia*, 28 March 2002.
- 41 *Slovo Kyrgyzstana*, 12 September 2003.
- 42 *Kyrgyz Infocentre*, 11 September 2002, BBC MS.
- 43 *Slovo Kyrgyzstana*, 28 November 2002, FBIS. The CIS anti-terrorist centre was founded on 21 June 2000 by the CIS Council of Heads of State.
- 44 By July 2002, 500 Chinese enterprises had registered in Kyrgyzstan, where they jointly invested \$30m. China also plans to invest \$300m in the oil industry of Kyrgyzstan. *The Times of Central Asia*, 4 July 2002.
- 45 AKIpress, 20 September 2002, FBIS.
- 46 *Kyrgyz Press International*, 3 September 2002, BBC MS.
- 47 *Vechernyy Bishkek*, 28 October 2003, FBIS.
- 48 *The Times of Central Asia*, 24 October 2002. Kyrgyz radio reported the Chinese and Kyrgyz anti terrorist exercise in October 2002 at the Irkeshtam border post, with 300 men from each country. Kyrgyz Radio 1, 10 October 2002, FBIS.
- 49 Bishkek TV, 14 August 2002, BBC MS.
- 50 *Vechernyy Bishkek*, 2 March 2003, FBIS.
- 51 RIA Novosti, 5 October 2002.
- 52 Georgiy Rudov, 'Russia and Kyrgyzstan: Dynamics and Prospects of Relations', *Central Asia and the Caucasus*, July 2001, p46.
- 53 *Vechernyy Bishkek*, 26 June 2000, quoted in *The Times of Central Asia*, 29 June 2000.
- 54 *Slovo Kyrgyzstana*, 24 June and 22 August 2003.
- 55 Ibid.
- 56 Interview with President Akayev, *Slovo Kyrgyzstana*, 5 September 2003.
- 57 *The Times of Central Asia*, 6 December 2002.
- 58 *Komsomolskaya Pravda v Kirgyzstane*, 13 September 2002, FBIS.
- 59 *Krasnaya Zvezda*, 25 September 2003.
- 60 Ibid.
- 61 Georgiy Rudov, 'Russia and Kyrgyzstan: Dynamics and Prospects of Relations', *Central Asia and the Caucasus*, July 2001, p41.
- 62 Ibid, p45.
- 63 ITAR-TASS in English, 10 January 2003. The Kyrgyz uranium deposits were exhausted in the 1960s.
- 64 Pyramid TV, 26 September 2003, BBC MS.
- 65 AKIpress, 25 February 2003, BBC MS; *Kommersant*, 15 April 2003, FBIS.
- 66 *Slovo Kyrgyzstana*, 8 April 2003.
- 67 *Vechernyy Bishkek*, 29 June 2000; TAC, 6 July 2000.
- 68 *Rossiyskaya Gazeta*, 21 February 2003, FBIS; *Krasnaya Zvezda*, 5 December 2002.
- 69 *Delo*, 15 August 2001 quoted in *The Times of Central Asia*, 23 August 2001.
- 70 *Krasnaya Zvezda*, 25 September 2003.
- 71 President's Akayev initiative was mentioned by President Putin during the official launch (23 October 2003) of the base Kant air base. *Krasnaya Zvezda*, 24 October 2003.
- 72 Kyrgyzstan owes Russia \$138m in old loans and \$27m in new loans. In 2002, Russia rescheduled \$58m of Kyrgyz debt for 20 years (Georgiy Rudov, 'Russia and Kyrgyzstan: Dynamics and Prospects of Relations', *Central Asia and the Caucasus*, July 2001, p45; *Kabar*, 6 December 2002, FBIS).
- 73 *The Times of Central Asia*, 11 July 2002.
- 74 *Krasnaya Zvezda*, 25 September 2003.
- 75 *Krasnaya Zvezda*, 22 October 2003.

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- 76 *Krasnaya Zvezda*, 23 July, 23 September and 24 October 2003.
- 77 *Krasnaya Zvezda*, 28 June 2003.
- 78 *Krasnaya Zvezda*, 24 October 2003.
- 79 *The Times of Central Asia*, 27 June 2002.
- 80 Kyrgyz TV 1, 12 November 2002, FBIS.
- 81 *Vechernyy Bishkek*, 10 October 2002, FBIS.
- 82 *The Times of Central Asia*, 15 May 2003.
- 83 *Washington Post*, 9 February 2002.
- 84 *The Times of Central Asia*, 11 April 2002.
- 85 Strana.ru. 5 December 2002; APMC en ligne, 14 November 2002. All six Mirages returned to France in October 2002.
- 86 *Kabar*, 5 September 2002, FBIS; *The Times of Central Asia*, 12 September 2002.
- 87 AKIpress 24 September 2002, FBIS; AF Military News, www.airforce.military.news, February 2002.
- 88 *Kabar*, 28 October 2002, FBIS.
- 89 *Slovo Kyrgyzstana*, 4 April 2003; AKIpress, 16 October 2002, FBIS.
- 90 *Kabar*, 2 November 2002, FBIS; *Slovo Kyrgyzstana*, 29 July 2003.
- 91 *Krasnaya Zvezda*, 15 July 2003.
- 92 *The Times of Central Asia*, 15 May 2003.
- 93 *The Times of Central Asia*, 25 June 2003.
- 94 *The Times of Central Asia*, 27 February 2003.
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