

## Securing the interim period<sup>©</sup>

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The people's revolution in Kyrgyzstan has not passed without casualties, nor has it been empty of violence and looting. Events in Kyrgyzstan were no Georgia or Ukraine. Nevertheless, we now have a new government which must think of how to improve the security and stability in the country. Our joint focus must now turn from last week to the months preceding the June 26 Presidential election.

Political legitimacy must be sought through constitutional means. In light of this, the recent agreement between acting Prime Minister Bakiyev, and the new and old parliaments is a positive development that seems to be taking the country in the right direction.

The Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) has been at the center of developments in Kyrgyzstan in the last weeks. Aside from election monitoring, the OSCE was also facilitating dialogue between opposing sides during last week's events. We run various ad-hoc programs, such as the Kyrgyz Police Academy. It is my strong belief that in order to have a successful presidential election in June, the OSCE should remain in Kyrgyzstan and help the new government with preparations. The organization has valuable know-how in this field.

There are obviously a few preconditions to a successful – that means free and fair – election this June. First is security. Law and order in Kyrgyzstan must be restored. This, I understand, is difficult in light of the weakened security apparatus. The OSCE – but I would also think Russia, EU and America – can help the new government exercise law and order in the interim period. Specifically, the organization can help through increasing training programs for local security officers. A government cannot expect to wield legitimacy and power without controlling the streets and its territory. For this reasons, the work to be done on the security front is relevant.

Security and political stability is a precondition for foreign investment, without which, Kyrgyzstan cannot grow. Kyrgyz domestic economic base is too small and weak to be able to support the much overdue restructuring of the rigid industrial sector.

I'm worried about the economic future of Kyrgyzstan. Fifty percent of the population lives under the poverty line; there is a serious misbalance between economic well being in the north and in the south; unemployment is high, and much of the service and industrial sector has been looted. We all need to sit together and figure out a reconstruction and economic aid plan for Kyrgyzstan. Without external aid, the prospects for a swift and relatively painless recovery look grim. Having learned our lesson in the Balkans – where high unemployment is fueling perpetual social unrest and political

tension – it would seem highly irresponsible to now overlook the importance of helping Kyrgyzstan’s economy to its feet.

The OSCE can and will continue to help, but the OSCE cannot do the job in place of the government in Bishkek. For example, we can recommend that in the interest of stability, Kyrgyzstan needs an all inclusive, broad, government in the interim period. A committee for reconciliation and co-operation should perhaps be established. At the same time, members of the old regime cannot be completely denied from sharing the responsibilities and advantages of the new arrangement. By shutting them out of the process completely, they will be inclined to using extra-constitutional means for acquiring power.

What else can the OSCE do? I can talk with our member states in order to broaden the consultations format from 1 plus to 4 plus – including alongside the OSCE, also EU, Russia, and the US. Working through a broader format, it will be easier to help with hard security – particularly with monitoring the borders of Kyrgyzstan – and allocation of economic aid.

Ultimately, the future of Kyrgyzstan lies in the hands of its people. The time has come for sober and responsible government. The country has all to gain from a free and fair Presidential election in June. On its part, the OSCE is prepared to continue playing an active role in Kyrgyzstan. By working together, I’m convinced we can succeed in strengthening democracy in Kyrgyzstan, and broadening stability and security in the area.

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