



CIFP 
Country Indicators for Foreign Policy

A Risk Assessment Report: Kyrgyzstan

By: Phil Cook, Shelley Ford, Todd MacDonald, Kayla Pries
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UNIVERSITY



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of International Affairs



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Not only is Kyrgyzstan the sole democracy in Central Asia, it is also the newest parliamentary democracy in the world. Despite this newfound political freedom, Kyrgyzstan has continued to face political instability in the face of a newly elected parliament. Conflict-supporting trends have been found in the following CIFP key indicators: history of armed conflict, governance and political instability, militarization, population heterogeneity, and economic performance. This diagnostic finds that the most likely scenario for Kyrgyzstan will consist of political deadlock, intermittent protests and violence, continued repression of ethnic Uzbeks, and continued poverty.



STAKEHOLDER ANALYSIS

Internal Stakeholders

Roza Otunbaeva: Former Foreign Minister and ambassador to the United States, and current interim President until December 2011.

Melis Myrzakmaov: Mayor of the southern city of Osh and is gaining more momentum as a popular nationalist leader in the south, beyond central state control.

Kurmanbek Bakiyev: The recently ousted President has a high stake in the political future of Kyrgyzstan and his family's ownership of Kyrgyz industries. The Ata Zhurt party, winner of the election, is composed of the former president's supporters.

Political Parties: Ata Meken, led by Omurbek Tekebayev who constructed constitutional reforms under current interim government; Social Democratic Party of Kyrgyzstan, led by Almazbek Atambayev who promises economic reforms and close ties with Russia; Ata Zhurt, led by Kamchibek Tashiyev is a new but quickly growing party to watch for in the south.¹

Ethnic Groups: Russians are a large minority population in Kyrgyzstan with formal linguistic rights and represent a large percentage of government positions and investment industry. Uzbeks are a large minority concentrated in the south and are advocating for language and education rights, greater political power, and economic equality.

Other Groups: Hizb ut Tahrir is a non-violent Islamic group led principally by Uzbeks. The organization is banned throughout Central Asia for disseminating religious extremism and advocating a caliphate in Central Asia.²

External Stakeholders

Russia: Considers Kyrgyzstan to be within its sphere of influence and continues to have strong influence in Kyrgyz politics and media. Russia has stated they prefer a strong presidency rather than democracy in Kyrgyzstan, where it also operates a military base and has been granted permission to open a new one.³

United States: Officially supports democratic development in Kyrgyzstan, funds development projects, and has an airbase in Manas which facilitates operations in Afghanistan.


Neighbouring Countries: All are members of the Collective Security Treaty. Uzbekistan shares a border with Kyrgyzstan where there is a large Uzbek minority. Uzbekistan controls their natural gas supply and periodically cuts it off.⁴ Constant border disputes and clashes between Kyrgyz citizens and Uzbek military at border points have affected this relationship.⁵ Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan coordinate anti-terrorism initiatives and occasional military manoeuvres. In the past, on multiple occasions, armed militants have used Tajikistan as a base from which to attack Kyrgyzstan.

China: China shares a border with Kyrgyzstan; bilateral trade is now more than \$1 billion; an increasing number of Chinese migrants flow into Kyrgyzstan; in January 2010, Kyrgyzstan's national electric company signed a \$342 million contract with the Chinese Tebian Electric; a rail line may connect the countries in the future.⁶

Canada: Largest foreign investor in Kyrgyzstan, due to the Canadian company, Centerra, which operates the Kumtor gold mine that represents approximately 7% of Kyrgyzstan's GDP.⁷ The Canadian International Development Agency currently contributes \$2 million to emergency assistance for southern Kyrgyzstan in response to the recent conflict.⁸

Terrorist Groups: IMU (Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan/ Islamic Movement of Central Asia) operates from Tajikistan and Afghanistan and recruits Kyrgyz Uzbeks.

OSCE: Organization of which Kyrgyzstan is a member; the OSCE currently has 22 long-term observers in Kyrgyzstan and sent another 300 for the election.

2006 CIPF SCORE	 KEY INDICATORS	TREND ANALYSIS
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CIPF 3.40	HISTORY OF ARMED CONFLICT	 DETERIORATING
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Stabilizing Factors:⁹

- There is no history of armed conflict in Kyrgyzstan and there has been no non-state armed conflict since 2002.¹⁰
- The total number of refugees hosted has declined from 2,598 in 2005 to 423 as of January 2010.¹¹
- The total number of stateless persons has declined from an estimated 100,000 in 2005 to 24,615 in January 2010.^{12,13}

Destabilizing Factors:

- Following the outbreak of violence in June 2010, approximately 90,000 Kyrgyz nationals and ethnic Uzbeks fled to neighbouring Uzbekistan.¹⁴
- Approximately another 300,000 fled their homes within Kyrgyzstan,¹⁵ with 75,000 of those people still reported as internally displaced people.¹⁶

CIPF 8.66	GOVERNANCE AND POLITICAL INSTABILITY	 DETERIORATING
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Destabilizing Factors:

- Since its independence in 1991, Kyrgyzstan has experienced two political revolts.¹⁷
- After the revolt on April 7, 2010, supporters of Bakyev attempted to seize government buildings in the south.¹⁸
- Kyrgyzstan has experienced the deterioration of civil and political rights since 1991.¹⁹
- Although recent elections were considered fair by observers, Kyrgyzstan’s democracy is unconsolidated (i.e. two successful concurrent elections have yet to be held), especially in light of the vote recount.²⁰
- Only five parties won the 5% requirement for parliamentary seats, leaving one-third of all voters supporting a party that failed to gain a seat in parliament. The leading party (Ata Zhurt) has pledged to overturn the new constitution.²¹

CIPF 4.54	MILITARIZATION	 DETERIORATING
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Destabilizing Factors:

- Since 2001 there has been a steady increase in military spending from \$78.4 million USD to \$185 million USD in 2008. The spending on internal security accounts for a substantial part of total military spending.²²
- Since 2002 the total armed forces has increased from 15,900 personnel to 21,000 in 2008.²³

CIPF 6.00	POPULATION HETEROGENEITY	 DETERIORATING
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- Ethnic diversity: Kyrgyz: 69.6%, Uzbeks: 14.5%, Russians: 8.5%, Other: 7.5%²⁴
- Religious diversity: Muslim 75%, Russian Orthodox 20%, Other 5%²⁵

Stabilizing Factors:

- The Kyrgyz government appoints Uzbek deputies to govern large Uzbek populations.²⁶
- All political parties have respected the requirement to include a minimum of 15% ethnic minorities in their candidate lists with the lists overall containing 23% ethnic minority candidates.²⁷

Destabilizing Factors:

- In 2004 a law was passed requiring students and state and local government officials to be proficient in Kyrgyz; one-third of advertisements and news broadcasts must be in Kyrgyz.²⁸ Additionally, there are no minority language schools and children who are not proficient in Kyrgyz or Russian face barriers to education.²⁹
- Despite attempts to rebuild destroyed neighbourhoods with less segregation of Uzbeks and Kyrgyz, the Uzbeks argue their traditional community structure is being destroyed.³⁰
- Ethnic Uzbek minorities have protested for enhanced political participation, language rights, and schooling.³¹ Uzbeks and other minority groups are consistently underrepresented and face employment, housing and general economic

discrimination.³² Since the June 2010 clashes, many Uzbeks face arbitrary arrest, beatings, torture, and intimidation from Kyrgyz law enforcement.³³

- There is economic and political disparity between the northern and southern regions of Kyrgyzstan. This disparity is exacerbated due to the high concentration of ethnic Uzbeks in the south. Perhaps as a result, there is increasing Kyrgyz extremist nationalism in the south which has been unchallenged by the central government.³⁴
- Clashes between ethnic Uzbeks and Kyrgyz inhabitants in the southern cities of Osh and Uzgen resulted in 300-1000 deaths in 1990, and at least 351 deaths in June 2010. Thousands of houses and schools were burned in the Osh and Jalalabad regions and at least 400,000 people (mostly Uzbeks) were forced to flee.³⁵
- Authorities have had little political will to investigate the source of the June 2010 violence or to facilitate intensive reconciliation programs.³⁶ Reconciliation may be further derailed if attention is drawn to the fact that only ethnic Uzbeks are currently standing trial for those events.³⁷

CIFP 4.03

DEMOGRAPHIC STRESS



STABLE

Stabilizing Factors:

- Over the past 5 years, the Kyrgyzstan population has been growing at a steady rate ranging from 0.8% to 1.0%.³⁸ Consequently, the population density has not changed, remaining at 27 people per sq. km.³⁹

Destabilizing Factors:

- Kyrgyzstan's population of youth aged 0 – 14 is 29%, which is marginally higher than the global average. Kyrgyzstan's youth bulge has traditionally been high, but has been in a slow decline since 2000.⁴⁰

CIFP 7.20

ECONOMIC PERFORMANCE



DETERIORATING

Stabilizing Factors:

- International donors have pledged \$1.1 billion to Kyrgyzstan for the 2010-2012 period, much of which will go towards public services, social welfare support, and reconstruction efforts following this year's violence.⁴¹
- The Kumtor Gold Mine accounts for more than 7% of GDP. With global gold prices expected to continue to rise over the next two years, and with increased output from the mine, revenue from gold sales is expected to increase and will continue to contribute to overall GDP.⁴²
- The construction sector remains strong because of Russian- and Chinese-financed hydroelectric projects and the requirement to rebuild damaged property after the summer's unrest.⁴³
- High water levels this year in the Toktogul water reservoir have led to higher energy exports to Kazakhstan.⁴⁴
- Remittances from migrant workers in Russia and Kazakhstan have risen steadily since 2000 and account for as much as 40% of GDP.⁴⁵
- Kyrgyzstan has already reached and exceeded the target for Millennium Development Goal 1 (extreme poverty reduction). However, the level of poverty in the country remains significant.⁴⁶

Destabilizing Factors:

- There is great economic disparity between the north and south of the country.⁴⁷
- Prior to the violence of this year, the country was beginning to recover from a series of external shocks. GDP was expected to grow at 4.6%. However, it is now expected to decline by 3.5% after the summer's unrest.⁴⁸
- A large budget deficit is expected for 2010. The government will have trouble raising revenue, while at the same time, will be called upon to increase expenditures on items like social spending and recovery.⁴⁹
- Prices of goods are likely to increase as the year comes to a close and the government attempts to raise them to cost-recovery levels in the electricity sector.⁵⁰
- Poverty reduction depends on sustainable economic growth. However this is hampered by a lack of economic diversification and a vulnerability to factors beyond the country's control. For example, GDP growth is significantly affected by global gold prices and gold output from the Kumtor mine, by retail trade with the country's neighbours, and by the flow of remittances from migrant workers in Russia or Kazakhstan.⁵¹

Stabilizing Factors:

- Kyrgyzstan has encountered considerable success in the area of immunization, an important factor in reducing infant mortality rates. 98.8% of children now receive vaccinations against measles, there have been no registered cases in recent years of polio, and cases of diphtheria, measles, and hepatitis B have significantly decreased.⁵²
- The country has also seen a decrease in the incidence of tuberculosis as diagnosis and treatment of the disease has improved.⁵³
- Life expectancy at birth has increased significantly.⁵⁴
- There is relative parity between men and women in terms of political, economic, and social opportunities.⁵⁵

Destabilizing Factors:

- There is disparity in human development levels between the various regions and provinces. Bishkek and the Issyk-Kul province (where the Kumtor mine is located) enjoy high levels of human development. The southern provinces have comparatively lower levels of human development.⁵⁶
- Kyrgyzstan has one of the highest maternal mortality rates in the CIS (55 per 100,000 births in 2008, and these are mostly from preventable causes). This number reflects a low level of awareness of family planning methods, a lack of adequate access to medical services, and a shortage of qualified medical personnel, especially in rural areas.⁵⁷
- While the country places a premium on education and has a well-developed network of institutions, the system was created during the Soviet era and the education it provides does not always meet the needs of a modern market economy. Many students leave school unprepared for the labour market and problems persist with adequate numbers of teachers, funding, etc.⁵⁸

Stabilizing Factors:

- A UN Special Rapporteur recently indicated that Kyrgyzstan has made progress in addressing radioactive and toxic waste dumps.⁵⁹
- An Environmental Security Concept was endorsed by the President in 2007 which determined state environmental development and priorities until 2020. Also, an Environmental Performance Review Process was adopted in 2008.⁶⁰
- The 2003-2008 period showed an increase in the amount of forested land.⁶¹

Destabilizing Factors:

- Kyrgyzstan continues to face the legacy of Soviet uranium mining and contaminated radioactive waste with 92 hazardous waste dumps.⁶² Combined with the fact that Kyrgyzstan has the highest level of dangerous seismic activity in Central Asia the uranium tailings have the potential to create an ecological crisis.^{63,64}
- Water: Kyrgyzstan has adequate water runoff but must share with neighbouring territories, making it an issue of contention and heightened competition within Kyrgyzstan and between its neighbours.^{65,66}
- Land: Kyrgyzstan faces increased competition for arable land which results in soil erosion (60%), soil salinization (6%) and ethnically disproportionate land ownership.⁶⁷ Of 10 million hectares of agricultural land, 88% is considered degraded and exposed to desertification.⁶⁸

Stabilizing Factors:

- International aid and assistance has increased significantly because of this year's violence and will help to rebuild the country, especially in the south.⁶⁹
- Hydroelectric expansion raises the prospect of increased investment, and the future possibility of exporting hydroelectricity to a larger market, which could include Pakistan, Afghanistan, and China.⁷⁰

Destabilizing Factors:

- Kyrgyzstan is vulnerable to external economic developments because of its landlocked position, and also because of its significant dependence on remittances from migrant workers.⁷¹
- The country is located on an international drug trade route that runs from Afghanistan to Europe.⁷²
- Instability in Tajikistan, the Ferghana valley region, threatens to add further volatility to Kyrgyzstan.⁷³



BEST-CASE SCENARIO

- A coalition government supporting the recent constitutional amendments is formed allowing for the further consolidation of democracy. Consequently, foreign aid and assistance will be used more effectively, improving social programs and human development in accordance with the Millennium Development Goals.
- This new-found stability will attract further investment enabling the government to undertake much needed economic diversification, and results in sustained economic growth and decreased wealth disparities.
- The government will be stable enough to undertake a formal investigation into the June 2010 ethnic violence and begin the process of community reconciliation. However, due to the long-term trend of nationalist mentality (recently affirmed by election results), ethnic minorities will receive only minor representation in the government and little cultural recognition. Small ethnic clashes will still flare up but will remain localized and intermittent.



WORST-CASE SCENARIO

- A coalition government will fail to form resulting in political deadlock, which will be used to justify a return to the strongman politics of the past. The state will become increasingly repressive as was the trend pre-April 2010 and increasingly discriminatory towards ethnic minorities, especially the Uzbeks in the south. Ethnic violence will continue to erupt throughout the south with the possibility of destabilizing the rest of the country and the region. Without the capacity to deal with the violence (and a proven high reliance on civilian volunteers to keep order), local leaders will increasingly take matters and resources into their own hands further disintegrating central state control.
- The continued ethnic tension and instability will foster recruitment and support for terrorist organizations and insurgent groups, resulting in weakening state power in the Ferghana valley. Military forces from surrounding states will attempt to contain these groups by engaging in enemy-centric operations, which, in turn, results in indiscriminate violence and the population's declining support for state.
- Economic recovery will be unsuccessful due to the lack of a strong central government capable of implementing institutional reforms and sustaining economic growth. Human development will be hampered and poverty will remain widespread allowing the regional disparities between the north and south to continue to grow. Kyrgyzstan will begin to resemble a failed state.



MOST LIKELY SCENARIO

- No matter the results of the election recount, the possibility of a stable coalition forming will remain low, making further institutional reforms difficult to implement. The parties that did not meet the necessary 5% threshold to enter parliament have strong support throughout the country and will continue to protest their exclusion. The current political and cultural climate indicates that Uzbeks are unlikely to receive formal rights or concessions in the near future under any possible government. Therefore, ethnic clashes and protests will continue sporadically over the next few years as Uzbeks continue to push for recognition and economic improvement.
- Foreign aid, high gold revenues, and remittances will help mitigate the economic damage caused by this year's violence. However, political instability and the difficulties of working within a tenuous coalition government will result in the hampering of development and implementation of economic reforms. Consequently, sustainable economic growth will not occur and poverty reduction will be minimal if at all present.

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