

**FROM AUTHORITARIANISM TO TRUE DEMOCRACY,
FROM AUTOCRACY TO PARLIAMENTARISM**

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Dear Colleagues!

1.

The present session is built around the issues of combating transnational crime and corruption. However, instead of discussing the issues related to fighting such threats, I would rather touch upon the issues pertinent to the impact of political development on the capacity of a state to protect its citizens from the emergence and proliferation of such threats. The tragic events in the south of our Republic have revealed the vulnerability, which was until recently hidden behind the authoritarian regime. As it turned out, despite the immense credentials, the Presidential authority failed to strengthen the military forces in charge of ensuring defense, security as well as law and order in Kyrgyzstan.

On April 7 2010, change of power occurred in Kyrgyzstan for the second time in the past five years. Just like in the year 2005, the popular protests and overthrow of the government were caused due to indignation of the people at the established political system. Having abused the unlimited power, the President Bakiev brought under his control the executive, legislative and judicial power branches.

Under the family ruling, governance was not executed by government institutions gaining legitimacy through the nationwide election, but

by a small group of people close to the president. Vested interests, preferences of his relatives had more effect rather than the decisions made by the official government bodies and laws of the country. This is revealed through the takeover of the entire branches of economy for personal gain by the people from the president's circles as well as through the utmost exploitation of the average citizens of the country. The richest people of Kyrgyzstan are not businessmen and bankers, but a small group of rapidly promoted "court" relatives and friends. The new oligarchs have ignored the public opinion and rule of law through the end; they hired state officers, judges and members of Parliament to prosecute civil activists. They imposed the "adequate" laws, court verdicts, resolutions and arrest warrants, orders for financial inspections at the undesired organizations and people on the government agencies and state officers.

Murders, attacks on the members of Parliament, public figures and journalists happened recurrently in Kyrgyzstan. Prominent party leaders had to leave the country and seek political asylum abroad. Recurrent mass forgeries, falsifications have fully denigrated the elections institute. Shortly before the power change, Bakiev declared the elections and western democracy institutes to be not acceptable for Kyrgyzstan.

2.

The provisional government, established by the lead opposition parties of Kyrgyzstan on April 7, have announced Constitutional reforms and parliamentary elections. The new Constitution was drafted by a specially appointed body – a Constitutional Council comprising representa-

tives of various political parties and non-governmental organizations. However, in the midst of preparations to the referendum, supporters of the previous regime organized provocative actions in different regions of Kyrgyzstan. All attempts of the revenge-seekers to disrupt the society were unsuccessful. Then, they shifted the provocations toward ethnic conflicts. Clashes between the Kyrgyz and Uzbek communities started in the night of June 11. The following days, the skirmishes expanded to cover several adjacent rayons. The military forces managed to bring the situation under their control on the third day only. Over the few days, the conflict had cost many lives, many people were injured and lost their homes. Thousands of people left their houses in the conflict areas. Return of the internally displaced people has taken weeks, in some areas the process is still ongoing.

The provisional government considers these events as a new form of terrorism – a carefully planned induction of the ethnic conflict. Many local and influential international non-governmental organizations noted there were well-organized actions with a political purpose – to destabilize the social and political situation and paralyze the public administration system.

Given the very complicated circumstances, the provisional government made a decision not to delay legitimization of the state power by holding nationwide voting.

3.

According to the local and international observers, the referendum of June 27 was well organized and the citizens were highly enthusiastic about this event. Overall, 72% of the voters of Kyrgyzstan took part in

the referendum. The referendum ballot had one question on the new Constitution and the president for the transitional period. According to the official results, 90% of the people voted for the parliamentary republic and for election of Roza Otunbaeva, the chairwoman of the provisional government as a new ruler of the state. The women have not held key government positions in Central Asia before, such as the president or a prime-minister. However, we are not afraid of being ahead of our neighbors. Possibly, the example of Kyrgyzstan will make the women in the region have faith in themselves and stand up for their own rights stronger. The world is changing, the people are changing, so are the traditions. We opposed the stereotypes about helplessness of women and their political indifference with the real proof of women's active participation in the political processes.

Hence, Kyrgyzstan has established two important political precedents in Central Asia. For the first time in the region, a woman has become a ruler of the country and parliamentary governance has been approved. The choice for a parliamentary republic is justified through the in-depth crisis of authoritarian regimes based on the strong presidential power. Family and clan based ruling, nepotism, corrupted and marginalized ideologies of power have led to comedown of the state and its institutes. The social foundation of the public administration system contracted to the small group of people close to the president and having vested interests in perpetration of his ruling. A significant part of the population have had a strong resentment and disapproval of the politics and accompanying developments and people. In light of the develop-

ments, an inclination toward the parliamentarism has become a adjustment trigger and the imperative.

4.

Many politicians and experts in Kyrgyzstan and abroad are watching inquisitively and doubtfully trying to guess what such an unusual political experiment in the region will lead to. It is believed that sacralization of a ruler, who plays the role of a messiah, a prophet, is intrinsic to the mindset and political culture of the Central Asian countries. Development of political systems in the post-Soviet period was accompanied with a concentration of power in the hands of the presidents. The major question is whether it is possible to have an effective parliamentary governance in a society still preserving the traditional institutes and relations, regional, ethnic and religious differences and sub-cultures.

Certainly, transition of Kyrgyzstan to parliamentary state is a challenge to the political tradition in the region. The Constitution reforms and following changes will give a start to development of the new political culture and new political relations in the society.

Nowadays, Kyrgyzstan is undergoing one of the most complicated periods in the country's history. We cannot live as we did before, however, living the new way implies challenging ourselves and the established traditions. At onset of the past century, the head of the Russian revolution, Vladimir Lenin declared the possibility to build socialism in a separated country. Today, it becomes obvious, it is impossible to build a new political system in isolation, separately from similar systems in other societies. Kyrgyzstan is surrounded by large states with strictly centralized regimes. The mighty authoritarian political culture of Eurasia

is not giving a warm welcome to the unusual neighbor. Under such circumstances, the mere emergence of democratic states, even in the other regions of world – is a support and a reference point for democratic development of Kyrgyzstan. We count on the international cooperation toward the development and strengthening of democracy in our country.

5.

We realize the consequences and remnants of the long-lasting authoritarian regime cannot be overcome at once. We realize the large-scale alterations will not come easy and quickly. At the same time, outcomes of the referendum show the level of support to reforms and regeneration is very high. Both on April 7 and June 27, the people of Kyrgyzstan supported in-depth social and political transformations.

As a head of the one of lead political parties in Kyrgyzstan with social and democratic inclination, I would like to present our vision for further political development of the country.

The modern social democracy is an alternative to radicalism in the Central Asian region. We oppose political radicalism expressed in authoritarian regimes. We oppose religious radicalism – a politically loaded version of Islamic doctrine. We oppose liberal (market-based) radicalism, as its guiding principle is «gain at any cost» eliminates economic and then political pluralism and leads to total commercialization of the social life, cruel exploitation of the workers and natural resources. We oppose ethical radicalism expressing itself in chauvinist doctrines on the superiority of nation over the others. Any form of radicalism does not address the issues and challenges, but pushes them deeper inside. Actual preparedness of any state to combat organized crime and corruption is

ensured through the development of transparent, accountable to society institutes of the political system. Neither radicalism, nor top-down command structure ensure protection of the society from the challenges and threats. This is ensured through improved involvement in the political processes, expanded social foundations of the governance and strengthened responsibility of the state officers for execution of public administration functions. In case the reforms in Kyrgyzstan are successful, it is not the form of government, which will change, but the entire range of relations comprising or related to the political system and public administration.