

Societal Dimension of Conflicts in Central Asia: The Case of Kyrgyzstan

Rustam Burnashev
(Professor of Kazakh-German University)

Irina Chernykh
(Chief Researcher of the Kazakhstan Institute
for Strategic Studies)



Contemporary literature on conflicts in Central Asia is mostly descriptive by its character. The analysis of security issues in Central Asia in most cases is focused on the interests of traditional actors of international relations (the states) and those threats, challenges and risks they face. That may lead to least two kinds of outcomes:

- many of the conclusions drawn on the basis of such analysis about the conflict potential in the region with the terms such as 'new Great Game' and 'the arc of instability' are premature, ideology-driven and publicistic;
- geographical territorial and politico-military aspects of security are emphasized whereas state (society) level of analysis is often neglected.

In the meanwhile the structuralist, post-structuralist and constructivist approaches for security studies offer a number of quite effective instruments for analysis to avoid the

discrepancies mentioned above, namely those of genealogy (Der Derian 1987; Ashly 1987), level of analysis (Waltz 1959; Kaplan 1957; Buzan et al. 1993.), securitization concept (Wæver 1995) and sectors of security (Buzan et al. 1998.). In term of methodology the Copenhagen School of security studies is the most holistic one emphasizing societal and identification security, regional level of analysis and most importantly securitization and desecuritization processes through which social groups construct something as a threat.

According to the Copenhagen School the societal and identification sector refers to “those ideas and practices that identify individuals as members of a social group”, it is about “identity the self-conception of communities and of individuals identifying themselves as members of a community” (Buzan et al. 1998: 119). Thus societal dimension of any conflict appear when a large identity group or its particular members determine something as a threat to their survival as a community and start to act in proper way. Usually these groups are mainly national or ethnic.¹⁾

The Copenhagen School makes an assumption that a policy on societal security and positioning of societal conflicts refer to conceptualization of identities, discourse identities above all. Discourse nature of identities means that there are no any ‘objective’ ones; the process of identification is realized exclusively within a discourse as a text-process leading to an identity as a text-result. Identities are therefore conceptualized as something existing as long as it is constantly reproduced by a given discourse and is not questionable within alternative discourses (Anderson 1983).

Structure of Discourse Space in Central Asia

The nodal points of the discursive formation that defined state-national identification in Central Asia started to form in the end of 19th and beginning of 20th century during Russian conquest of the region. Before this, Central Asian people were not aware of ethnic consciousness. The main routinely necessary identities were based on estate, religious, economic, cultural, regional, and tribal divisions (Абашин 2004: 39). The final fixture of state-national identification happened during the framework of the construction of the Soviet Union as a modern state.

The Soviet Union which was forming on the territory of the former Russian Empire had some specific characteristics. It was defined by the Soviet mainstream ideology and

respective understanding of national and ethnic processes. The definition of nation that had been offered by Joseph Stalin in 1913 was the initial point here: “A nation is a historically constituted, stable community of people, formed on the basis of a common language, territory, economic life, and psychological make-up manifested in a common culture” (Stalin 1954: 307). The nation was defined as a cultural phenomenon (ethnos) rather than a political one. The separation of any nation-culture presuppositions were encompassed by this definition. The combination of Stalin’s definition of a nation with political concepts created the concept of a titular nation. A titular nation is an ethnic group that gives rise to some autonomous entities (quasi-state) within the Soviet Union. A titular nation had a preferred position with reference to other ethnical groups. The language and culture of a titular nation were supported on the state level, representatives of a titular nation were promoted to management position in local authority. Such local authorities enjoyed quite a high degree of autonomy. Therefore titular ethnic groups felt they had some specific rights on certain territory and corresponding privileges. Eventually marginalization of other non-titular ethnic groups occurred. They were apprehended as newcomers or immigrants regardless of when they moved to that territory.

Thus, in Central Asia as part of Soviet Union, the modern concepts of state and nation started to form on the basis of a strong tie existing between them. Herein these identities in Central Asia were formed on basis of the absence of experience of both a state and a nation. Formation of one part of ‘state-nation’ constellation had a limited character - for that time we can speak only about ‘quasi-statehood’ in Central Asia. National identification was associated with the concept of titular nation (ethnic group).

In the course of USSR’s disintegration, there was a possibility to form full modern states in the territory of Central Asia and, consequently, there arose the need to form (to find) state identities, that would correspond to the national ones. The principles of these identities are the scheme formed in Soviet Union framework. This meant that the state was related not to the political concept of a nation but to the cultural-ethnic concept, the concept of a titular nation. In fact, codification and protection of some set of practices were talked about as basis for the creation of an appropriate ethnocratic state. Hence, the concepts of state and titular nation are at the center of national security discourses in Central Asian countries.

If *state* and *nation* are to be the nodal points of discursive security space, it is necessary to decide who can do *serious speech acts* (Dreyfus and Rabinow 1983: 48) and who are the securitizing actors in this space. In Central Asia the models of nation and state appear as

1) Barry Buzan defined societal security as one which concerns “the sustainability, within acceptable conditions for evolution, of traditional patterns of language, culture and religious and national identity and custom” (Buzan 1991: 19).

created by the governments so that only the governments can hold a position of a significant speaker and a securitizing actor. Therefore it is impossible to understand state and nation identification in Central Asia in the end of 20th century without comprehension of the institutions of the state power (the *government*). In the first stage of establishing nationhood (at the end of 1980s and beginning of 1990s) these institutes strove to overcome or compensate for the limitations during its domination and dependence, which characterized the Soviet period and became evident with the so-called 'cotton case' and the December 1986 events in Alma-Ata, Kazakhstan. These suppose that nation-state identification in Central Asian countries is ultimately based on the concept of *independence*.

Like Machiavelli's *Prince*, the governments in Central Asian countries stand in 'a relation of singularity and externality, and thus of transcendence, to his principality' (Foucault 1991: 89-90). Externality and transcendence of Central Asian governments form the next security positioning:

- the internal aspect: there is lack of a priori reasons for the population to accept government authority (usually there is discussion about the honesty/ dishonesty of a government's election);
- the external aspect: there is possibility for outside forces to interfere in domestic affairs or to drop the government from power (usually there are talks about the former metropole's politics or about restrictions of sovereignty in the course of a political integration and the forming of supranational institutions);

So the purpose of power exercise is the maintenance, the consolidation and the protection of the state which is understood not as the ensemble of its subjects and territory, but rather as the government's relation to the territory and its subjects (Foucault 1991: 90). In fact, this exact type of state is a main referent object here. In Uzbekistan this special status of the government was fixed as one of 'the five principles of Uzbekistan's development': 'The state functions as chief reformist' (Ҳафимов 1993). Accordingly, the government which forms both the state (accordingly, equating itself with or elevating itself above the state) and the nation, qualifies to have for a long-term legitimacy and special protection. These are ensured through the ideas of *stability* and *security*. The constricting government cannot be replaced, even within democratic procedures, and its concepts are not subject to criticism within liberal procedures, because liberal-democratic procedure washes away the 'unity' of the nation and the state. In this way, security and stability are contrasted with *democracy* and *freedom*. A state constructed around the ideas of security and stability tends to act as a suppressing

force in both external and internal matters. At the same time, because the main focus of this state is the security of the government, while huge amounts of resources are spent dealing with internal politics to ensure the stability of the regime.

On the whole, in Central Asia, the discursive formation structure is centers on the correlation between the constructions of *identity*, as well as its components (such as government, state, and titular nation), and the perception of *stability/ democracy* and *security/ freedom*.

The Central Asian discursive formation did not include the concept of *security* into its structure until 1995. Before that time *security* was used in two ways:

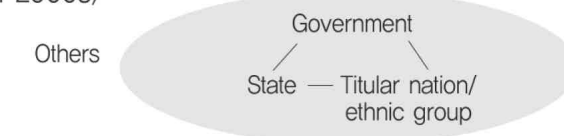
- in its everyday meaning (being secure, safe, not threatened);
- as a description of state protection against firstly internal threats.²⁾

In essence, this interpretation of security as state protection against internal threats was adopted from the Soviet Union as consolidated by KGB activity. Protection against external threats was defined in terms of defense and disarmament and, accordingly, it fixed exclusively military and political security aspects.

In regards to security, the Central Asian political discourse during the first half of 1990s thus reproduced the same structure of understanding and conceptual framework characteristic of the Soviet Union (Wæver 1995). Accordingly, societal interaction and various types of interference in domestic affairs (from Moscow, first of all) were regarded as most dangerous and destabilizing. These issues were very important because at that time, up until 1995, Uzbekistan was extremely weak as state, it didn't yet have any formed or structured machineries of government. At that period societal interactions in Uzbekistan were considered as issues of domestic security and were concerned with the conceptualized fulfillment of the *nation* (or *titular nation*) and *state*, their correlation, and definition of the *government* and *governmentality* formats.

The structure of securitization process in Central Asian states may be illustrated by the scheme 1 below.

〈Scheme 1〉 Structural model of securitization in Central Asia (the beginning of 1990s – the middle of 2000s)



2) Collective Security Treaty (Tashkent, 1992) was just one exception.

The scheme above also describes the principle nodal points of societal conflicts. These points are manifested in the following issues:

- What are the rights and duties of ethnic minorities in comparison with those of the title nation/ethnic group?
- What are the possibilities for ethnic minorities to be a functional actor or to pose a threat?
- Is the social stratification correlatable with ethnic differentiation within a society?
- What are the possibilities for ethnic minorities to be fully represented in power structures and national government?

There was a break-off in the mid 1995 when Central Asian countries adopted the concept of security very similar to that commonly accepted in the western tradition by the middle of the 20th century. The states of the region were included into the CSCE in the framework of CSCE-Europe project and therefore the government structures of Central Asian states were incorporated in the discourse space and the dialogue on transformation of the CSCE into OSCE. The characteristic of Central Asian understanding of regional security in the second half of 1990s was the fact that it focused on the importance of establishing a system of collective security rather than on necessity to support regional power balance and equilibrium like Europe. Henceforth, the concept of regional security associated with establishing a system of collective security, was actively included in the political dictionary and public documents. The idea of the regional system of collective security included the possibility of turning Central Asia into a separate regional security complex. Scope for constructing this security complex structure arose in framework of from discussion on so called contest for regional leadership between Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan. Emphasis was also doing laid on the traditional security threats such as possible neighboring regional powers interference (the idea of 'the New Great Game') and regional conflicts. However emphasis on domestic security has defined weakness of interstate relations. Central Asia has not acquired a cohesive character that allows talk of any relations which structure Central Asia as a regional complex. This is exemplified in the patterns of amity and enmity (Buzan 1991: 189-190; Buzan et al. 1998: 13). Therefore the conflicts in the region were either intrastate or interstate by their nature.

Intrastate Dimension of Societal Conflicts

Intrastate dimension of societal conflicts in Central Asia is determined by the fact this region

is a formation of weak states. According to Buzan (1991: 96-107) 'weak' and 'strong' states can be differentiated by:

- extent of social-political unity of the civil society and the government institutions;
- extent of correlation of the state and the nation;
- extent of statehood possessed by the country and extent of stability in terms of internal order.

The Central Asian states are weak, although not to an equal degree. One may generalize by saying that, to a varying extent, states in the region are typified by a low level of social and political cohesion and a narrow social base of support for existing political regimes (governments). The vast majority of the population is politically apathetic. Identification along national lines is weak here, and is forced to compete with other forms of self-identity.

The civil war in Tajikistan (1992-1997) is the most revealing window to understand security dynamics in the states of Central Asia. This war graphically illustrated how a country's weakness may result in the failure of statehood, and ultimately in national disintegration. Competition between different forms of identity politics (religious, ethnic, subethnic, and clan-based) and their corresponding elites' struggle for power played an enormous role in sparking the civil war. Social and economic background (mass unemployment, land poverty of farmers, low standards of living of majority of population) also brought about the military actions.

All other things being equal, weak states and their ruling elites are more inclined toward securitization. This tendency toward securitization is largely driven by the fact that, when speaking about the security and stability of their country, the Central Asian governments equate themselves with the nation. The governments of Central Asian states are convinced that security and stability are to be prized above all other values. Any effort to address the challenge of maintenance of stability in the framework of such a discourse inevitably reinforces authoritarian character of the current regimes. The argument is built on the premise that endowing the citizens with political rights would be too risky in light of the complexity of the external security situation. It is commonly argued that authoritarian methods including repressive ones against the opposition groups are vital to maintain independence and security of the state.

Interstate Dimension of Societal Conflicts

Interstate dimension of societal conflicts in Central Asia determined by the fact that it

comprises a number of weak powers; the strength of the states in Central Asia does not override the state borders. Moreover the 'essential structure' of regional security complex has not been formed yet in Central Asia.

Being a composition of weak states and governments Central Asia is the space where capacities of the states to interact or compete with each other are limited. These states are so weak that the strength they have is not likely to override their borders. It is typical for Central Asian countries to have looser ties among themselves than they have in their relationships with neighboring countries. Countries of the Central Asian mini-complex do not securitize one another, and accordingly do not ally against one another. The degree to which Central Asian countries' relations with Russia and China (for Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan) or Afghanistan (for Uzbekistan and Tajikistan) have been securitized was and is much greater. However domestic issues are much more significant for individual Central Asian state than any external affairs. The stance of Turkmenistan, which is distancing itself from any processes in Central Asia, is very indicative of the weakness of interstate dynamics.

The state borders issue is an exceptional one; the most problematic these were between Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan. The issue of water resources deficit shall be also regarded as an exception; those between Tashkent and Bishkek were close to be resolved by force several times.

There is some similarity in the positions of Central Asian countries with respect to certain transnational and sub-state actors (particularly terrorist and religious groups) whose activities are perceived as being international in nature, and there is a tendency toward greater securitization of actions taken against these actors. The dynamics of change in the content of treaties and agreements signed by Central Asian countries is quite revealing in this regard. While security arrangements adopted in Central Asia from 1997-1998 (the Treaty of Eternal Friendship between Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, and Kyrgyzstan, and the Joint Statement by Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan on Measures to Establish a Regional Security System in Central Asia) were aimed at regulating interstate relations, documents signed in 1999 and later (for example, the 2000 Treaty between Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan on Joint Actions in the Fight Against Terrorism, Political and Religious Extremism, Transnational Organized Crime, and Other Threats to Stability and Security) focus on 'new dimensions of international security', such as migration, demographic problems, trafficking in drugs and arms, transnational organized crime, and

terrorism.³⁾

Case-Study: Kyrgyzstan

The recent conflict which occurred in June 2010 in southern regions of Kyrgyzstan is quite illustrative for understanding of the assumptions made above. A number of inter-related actions of violent character there resulted in considerable numbers of casualties, refugees as well as burnt and demolished houses. In fact, what happened there was a manifestation of a violent stage of a local conflict on the background of grave political crisis combined with vacuum of legitimate state power in Kyrgyzstan resulted from political coup occurred in April 2010. One could think of a number of good reason for the conflict; competition for administrative offices, for economic resources, personal issues and lack of competence amongst public administrators, population depressed in the result of recent developments in the country, fears and aggressive sentiments accumulated within the latest period of time. However the narratives describing the origins and development of the conflict accentuate a number of specific features to structuralize it in a certain manner and consequently trigger further tension and in some cases proneness to conflict.

The Provisional Government's Narrative

During the initial stage of violence⁴⁾ Kyrgyz officials started to focus on its spontaneous character. Acting President of the Republic of Kyrgyzstan made the Official Statement on June 11, 2010 (*Ортинбаева* 2010)⁵⁾ saying that the most active participants were the young ("mass clashes of the groups of young people"). As for its intensity the conflict was labeled as a short-term one ("tensions between a number of groups lasted for several weeks", "yesterday's outburst was triggered by a number of local conflicts of domestic nature"). It is indicant enough that the statement language deliberately avoided any references on the parties of the conflict and their characteristics, they are described as 'general public members' ("to take measures under the law towards the persons calling for violence actions and stirring up hatred amongst the members of general public").

However the text contains indirect reference to a possible ethnic character of the conflict

3) A similar trend can be seen in the change in national security policy documents. Prior to 1999, the possibility of foreign aggression was securitized; now the focus is on such issues as migration, drugs, crime, and terrorism. See, for example, Military Doctrine of the Republic of Kazakhstan (2000) or the Defense Doctrine of the Republic of Uzbekistan (2000).

4) The violence stage of the conflict started at night of 10 -11 June 2010 in the city of Osh and Kara-Suy district of Osh oblast.

5) The Statement was broadcast live on national television on 11 June 2010.

through calling the people of Kyrgyzstan ‘multiethnic’. Moreover according to the Official Statement the Provisional Government of Kyrgyzstan “imposed the state of emergency in the cities of Osh and Uzgen as well as in Kara-Suy and Aravan districts of Osh oblast” having factually broadened the conflict zone. Given that these are the locations where the proportion of ethnic Uzbeks is over 1/3 the statement indirectly reveals that the Government initially interpreted the conflict as ethnic one (see table 1).

〈Table 1〉 Proportion of ethnic Kyrgyz and Uzbeks in the population of the districts and cities of Osh oblast (%)

District, city	The Kyrgyz	The Uzbeks
Alay District	99,6	–
Aravan District	39,6	58,7
Kara-Kulja District	99,9	–
Kara-Suu District	54,3	38,5
Nookat District	73,6	25,9
Uzgen District	73,8	22,2
Chong-Alay District	99,9	–
City of Osh	47,9	44,2
City of Uzgen	6,0	90,9

〈Sources: Census of Population (2010 a: 52–53); Census of Population (2010b: 27), Uzgen (2010).〉

Later the understanding that the developments of June 2010 in Kyrgyzstan were an actual ethnic conflict dominated. On June 16 the Provisional Government made the official Address to the Nation of Kyrgyzstan and World Community saying that “we have been targeted by the most up-dated weapon of mass destruction which is masterminding and stirring up ethnic conflict” (*Обращение* 2010). In the meanwhile the official discourse generated a supplementary line in understanding of the developments referring to some ‘Third Force’ involved into the conflict:

- these are the assumptions that there were no any internal causes of systemic character and the conflict originated due to some external factors: “the genuine cause of the tragedy is that it was a terrorist attack masterminded and implemented by the overthrown clans leaders exiled from”, “dozens of mercenaries”, “hundreds of provocateurs”, “information provocations”;

- these are the assumptions that the conflict was inspired by the supporters of the former president Kurmanbek Bakiy: “genuine cause is in unrealizable aspirations of those who used to have power to get it back... these people sent dozens of mercenaries and hired hundreds of provocateurs against their own people, their own compatriots, against their own

nation to accomplish their criminal intension to drown in blood their former motherland. The hundreds of perished and ethnic tension between brotherhood peoples are now lying at their doors”.

As the authors of the Statement were unwilling to recognize the problematic issues of systemic nature they had logical mismatch. Having admitted ethnic character of the conflict they argued that “criminals killed and looted people regardless their ethnic background”. The measures which the Provisional Government was to take were not systemic by their character as well: “we are committed to trace and find the provocateurs and organizers wherever they are and punish them all”.

There is quite a curious reference that Kyrgyzstan is a weak state where “protective mechanisms of state such as education, medicine, police force and army as well as culture and economy” are destructed “what we have left is “wreckage of state apparatus”.

The leaders of the country created certain lines of understanding which shall later be developed in a number of narratives that may be regarded as its substructures.

Narrative of Security Agencies of the Republic of Kyrgyzstan

The security agencies of Kyrgyzstan keeping the emphasis on former national leadership as the functional actors concretized them from one hand, from the other hand they shifted the matter into the explanatory field, namely into the discourse of ‘international terrorism’ which had proved to be effective in the late 1990s and first half of the 2000s.⁶⁾ Additionally the role of the parties in the conflict were not described as equal any longer, on the contrary, the references that both the Uzbeks and Kyrgyz suffered greatly during the conflict was replaced by position that the Uzbek side “was in gear with terrorists and pro-Bakiy forces” (*Государственная служба национальной безопасности Кыргызской Республики* 2010).

The Press-release issued by the Kyrgyz State Service for National Security on June 24, 2010 contained the data on “investigation of criminal cases on the facts of stirring up mass disorders and armed clashes between ethnic groups... in Osh and Jalal-Abad oblasts of Kyrgyzstan”. It stated that they “have identified certain individuals involved in destructive forces who are directly responsible for the tragedy” these were “international terrorist organizations namely ‘the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan’ and ‘the Islamic Jihad Union’

6) For more details on usage of international terrorism discourse in Central Asia see Bumashv and Chemykh 2005.

with an active participation of those from the family-clan regime of the Bakievs”. These people “have taken the advantage of problematic situation in the south of the country and latent tensions between the Uzbek and Kyrgyz communities having been there in Kyrgyzstan for about 20 years and having not been resolved yet”.

The Press-realize repeatedly accentuate the linkage of the major functional actors with the ethnic Uzbeks:

- describing the gunmen penetrated into Kyrgyzstan in May 2010 it was remarked that these were “15 experienced gunman of Uzbek ethnic background” commanded by “an ethnic Uzbek” and guided through the territory by “an ethnic Uzbek” as well;

- it was emphasized that “the groups were particularly active... in the territories of predominately Uzbek population”;

- “the role of the leaders of certain national-cultural centers” was accentuated, “these people made the political claims, namely to render the status of the second Official Language, and to establish national autonomy and to introduce 30% quota in the state apparatus and public administration” (apparently these kind of claims might be made only by the Uzbeks). It is also stated that “seeking realization of their political claims they teamed with the terrorists and pro-Bakiev forces”.

The National Commission’s Narrative

The National Commission on investigating the causes of the inter-ethnic clashes between ethnic Uzbeks and Kyrgyz in southern Kyrgyzstan in June 2010 was established under the Presidential Directive of June 12, 2010. The findings by the Commission were published on January 19, 2010.

The Report of the Commission stated the ethnic nature of the conflict. According to the Report “on June 10-14, 2010 the city of Osh, Osh and Jalal-Abad oblasts of Kyrgyz Republic witnessed the mass clashes between ethnic Uzbeks and Kyrgyz resulted in bashing, looting and arsons, big numbers of people from the both sides were killed”. The Commission concluded that there were historical premises for the conflict based on national territorial delimitation process of 1920s and the issues raised from the events in Osh in 1990 which have not been resolved.

With its attribution of the conflict as ethnic one the National Commission faced serious difficulties in its interpretation. From one hand the Report said that “there were no any facts of impairment of the rights and discrimination against ethnic Uzbeks in Kyrgyzstan”. From

the other hand “the number of Uzbeks in central and local state apparatus does not collate with the factual size of Uzbek community... The smallest indexes of Uzbek representation are in the military personnel, security services and police as well as tax and customs services, financial police. The Uzbeks are poorly represented amongst the judges and prosecutors”. It was also admitted that “there were no any mature, coherent and comprehensive state policy on ethnic issue in the country since its independence”.

The National Commission argued that violence was triggered by a number of factors: “lack of strong power through the vertical, profound demoralization of law enforcement agencies personnel, increase of organized crime activities throughout the country, activation of extremist, nationalist and separatist groups as well as individuals claiming political leadership”. The Commission concluded that “the days of tragedy revealed a complete lack of any coherent system of government response for prevention the emergence of ethnic conflict”. At the same time it was stated that “the events in southern Kyrgyzstan are a well-planned and large-scale provocation aimed at splitting the country and undermining the unity of its people”. The National Commission argued that the main driving forces were the following:

- “leaders of Uzbek communities having a strong nationalist sentiment” who considered that “the current situation is favorable for realization of their goals” and who started “to raise deliberately the issue of inter-ethnic relations attracting bigger numbers of people”;

- former Kyrgyz president Kurmanbek Bakiev and his supporters (the Bakievs clan) having close contacts with ‘Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan’, seeking “destabilization and enraging of the situation in the country”;

- “individual Kyrgyz criminal authorities” and drug dealers who had become more active due to the fact that “Bakiev regime has been overthrown and in the result the corruption linkages have been broken”.

The Commission also stated that the events themselves “were thoroughly planned beforehand” and triggered by “aspirations of the leaders of Uzbek community with extremist ideas” “to penetrate into power structures and therefore to realize the political interests of the Diaspora”. Additionally the Commission noted that it was the Uzbek side who had been actively preparing for the events (references to “a number of KamAZ cargo-truck loads refurnished with iron sheets and loopholes for shooting”). This description contradicts two groups of facts also determined by the Commission:

1. Mass seizure of ammunition by ethnic Kyrgyz “from military units of the Ministry of

Defence, Border Police and Ministry of Internal Affairs”;

2. Statistics collected by December 10, 2010 given by the National Commission about the numbers of killed with the reference to their ethnic background:

- “426 bodies were discovered in the city of Osh, Osh and Jalal-abad oblasts, 381 of them were indentified: 276 of Uzbeks and 105 of Kyrgyz and 2 were of the other ethnic origin” (in other words the number of Uzbeks killed during the riots is 2,6 bigger than the number of Kyrgyz);

- “investigation and operational groups opened 5162 criminal cases. 306 people were detained, 271 were in custody, and among them were 39 Kyrgyz and 230 Uzbeks and 2 of the other ethnic origin...” (the number of Uzbeks arrested is 5,9 bigger than the number of Kyrgyz).

Interesting enough the position of the members of the National Commission was much tougher when expressed in unofficial environment. The Chairman of the National Commission Abdygany Erkebayev in his interview to the Fergana.ru News Agency (Эркебаев 2011) makes a direct reference to the concept of titular nation. Judging the actions of Kadyrzhan Batyrov⁷⁾ he said that “people must understand what country, what state they are living in and therefore they must keep control over their words. A mono-ethnic state is one thing and a multi-ethnic state as we are having is quite a different thing. Especially when the state has a titular nation [Kyrgyz] who has given the name to the state itself and whose size is much bigger in the country...”.

Response of Central Asian States to Kyrgyzstan Developments

The argument about weakness of interstate relations in Central Asia may be proven by the manner they responded to the developments in Kyrgyzstan. The Report of the National Commission said that “all neighboring countries of the CIS as well as international community expressed their extreme concern about the developments in Kyrgyzstan and readiness to render humanitarian and financial assistance” (Заклячение 2011). There were no any other moves taken even in the framework of the structures designed for maintenance of regional security, namely the SCO and the CSTO.

Reaction of Uzbekistan was quite a specific one that can be explained by the involvement

of ethnic Uzbeks into the conflict.⁸⁾ From one hand Uzbekistan gave shelter to the refugees who were ethnic Uzbeks. From the other hand the Uzbek government attributed the conflict as domestic affair of Kyrgyzstan and had the position of non-interference. Speaking at the UN Millennium Summit on September 21, 2010 president of Uzbekistan Islam Karimov described the developments as “posing a grave threat of destabilization in the region of Central Asia” (Каримов 2010). He believed that “it was a well-planned and organized action of certain third forces” aimed at “retraction of Uzbekistan into a cruel massacre and eventually turning the inter-ethnic conflict into inter-state conflict of the two countries, namely Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan”.

Thus, the complex of discourses on the conflict in southern Kyrgyzstan in June 2010 is congruent in terms of its structure with the model of securitization given above in the figure 1 of this article (figure 1). It is based on contraposition of the titular nation (the Kyrgyz) and marginalized non-titular ethnic groups (the Uzbeks in this case) who are positioned as ‘the others’ posing unquestionable threat to Kyrgyz statehood due to either their separatist sentiment or aspiration to become included into Kyrgyz government structures.

The conflict which has been always quite likely to happen virtually occurred due to weakness of the Kyrgyz state and interference of ‘external forces’. The conflict also revealed extreme weakness of Central Asian countries as powers and consequently the limited extent to which the societal conflicts may occur on the level interstate relations.

Sources

- Anderson, Benedict (1983): *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, 2nd ed., London: Vero
- Ashly, Richard (1987): ‘The Geopolitics of Geopolitical Space: Towards a Critical Social Theory of International Politics’, *Alternatives*, 12 (4), 403-434
- Burnashev, Rustam and Irina Chernykh (2005): ‘Conditions for Securitization of International Terrorism in Central Asia’, *Connections. The Quarterly Journal of*

⁷⁾ Kadyrzhan Batyrov is the one of Uzbek minority leaders in Kyrgyzstan, a vice-president of the Uzbek ethnic-cultural center of Kyrgyzstan, a president of the Uzbek ethnic-cultural center of Jalal-Abad Province, a successful businessman.

⁸⁾ The interpretation of Uzbekistan of the conflict was as “cruel and murderous developments of interethnic nature” (Каримов 2010).

Partnership for Peace Consortium of Defense Academies and Security Studies Institutes, Spring: 131-142

- Burnashev, Rustam and Irina Chernykh (2009): 'Democracy and Security in Identity of Central Asia', in K. Santhanam, Kuralay Baizakova, and Fatima Kukeyeva (eds.), *Democratic Processes in Central Asia: Indo-Kazakh Perspectives*, New Delhi: Aryan Books International, 26-41
- Buzan, Barry (1991): *People, States and Fear: An Agenda for International Security Studies in the Post-Cold War Era*, 2nd ed., Hemel Hempstead: Harvester Wheatsheaf
- Buzan Barry, Jones Charles and Richard Little (1993): *The Logic of Anarchy: Neorealism to Structural Realism*, New York: Columbia University Press
- Buzan, Barry, and Ole Wæver (2003): *Regions and Powers: The Structure of International Security*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press
- Buzan, Barry, Ole Wæver, and Jaap de Wilde (1998): *Security: A New Framework For Analysis*, Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner
- Der Derian, James (1987): *On Diplomacy: A Genealogy of Western Estrangement*, Oxford: Basil Blackwell
- Foucault, Michel (1991): 'Governmentality', in Graham Burchell et al. (eds.), *The Foucault Effect: Studies in Governmentality*, Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 87-104
- Kaplan, Morton (1957): *System and Process in International Politics*, New York: Wiley
- Stalin, Joseph (1954): 'Marxism and the National Question', in J. Stalin, Works, Vol. 2, Moscow: Foreign Languages Publishing House: 300-381
- Wæver, Ole (1995): 'Securitization and Desecuritization', in Ronnie D. Lipschutz (ed.), *On Security*, New York: Columbia University Press, 46-86
- Waltz, Kenneth (1959): *Man, the State and War*, New York: Columbia University Press
- Абашин, Сергей (2004): *Население Ферганской долины, в С. Абашин и В. Бушков (ред.) Ферганская Долина: этничность, этнические процессы, этнические конфликты*, Москва: Наука: 38-101
- Бурнашев, Рустам и Ирина Черных (2006): *Безопасность в Центральной Азии: методологические рамки анализа (военный сектор безопасности)*, Алматы: Казахстанско-немецкий университет
- Государственная служба национальной безопасности Кыргызской Республики (2010): 'Пресс-релиз от 24 июня 2010 года', *Информационное агентство*

твое «Фергана.Ру», <http://www.fergananews.com/article.php?id=6629>

- Каримов, Ислам (1993): 'Новогоднее обращение Президента И. Каримова к народу Республики Узбекистан', *Правда Востока*, 1 января
- Каримов, Ислам (2010): 'Выступление президента Республики Узбекистан на пленарном заседании Саммита ООН «Цели развития тысячелетия» от 21 сентября 2010 года', *Правительственный портал Республики Узбекистан*, <http://www.gov.uz/ru/press/politics/6626>
- Отунбаева, Роза (2010): 'Обращение исполняющего обязанности президента Кыргызской Республики, председателя Временного правительства Кыргызской Республики Отунбаевой Р. И. от 11 июня 2010 года', *Официальный сайт Президента Кыргызской Республики*, http://www.kyrgyz-el.kg/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=383&Itemid=31
- Обращение (2010): 'Обращение Временного правительства Кыргызской Республики к народу Кыргызстана и мировому сообществу от 16 июня 2010 года', *Официальный сайт Президента Кыргызской Республики*, http://www.kyrgyz-el.kg/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=447&Itemid=31
- Заключение (2011): 'Заключение Национальной комиссии по всестороннему изучению причин, последствий и выработке рекомендаций по трагическим событиям, произошедшим на юге республики в июне 2010 года', *Кыргызское национальное информационное агентство «Кабар»*, http://kabar.kg/index.php?option=com_blogsidebar&isbydate=1&id=0&svt_date=2011-01-19&bsb_midx=-3&task=category&cid=12823&Itemid=1
- Перепись населения (2010a): *Перепись населения и жилищного фонда Кыргызской Республики 2009 года. Книга III: Регионы Кыргызстана. Ошская область*, Бишкек: Национальный статистический комитет Кыргызской Республики
- Перепись населения (2010b): *Перепись населения и жилищного фонда Кыргызской Республики 2009 года. Книга III: Регионы Кыргызстана. Город Ош*, Бишкек: Национальный статистический комитет Кыргызской Республики
- Узген (2010): 'Узген', *Ассоциация городов Кыргызской Республики*, <http://www.citykr.kg/yzgen.php>

■ Эркебаев, Абдыганы (2011): 'Глава Нацкомиссии по изучению юньских событий - обратях-узбеках, Батырове и национальном Достоянии: интервью от 24 января 2011 года', Информационное агенство «Фергана, Ру», <http://www.fergananews.com/article.php?id=6876>

