

Business & Politics in the Muslim World
News Monitoring Report
Weekly Report Central Asia
May 28 to June 4, 2010
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Report # 122

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- Azerbaijan To Boost Oil and Gas Production In 2010

BAKU -- Azerbaijan's President Ilham Aliyev has told an international conference on Caspian Sea oil and natural gas development that opened in Baku that his country will produce some 52 tons of oil and 30 billion cubic meters of gas this year.

- US presses Azerbaijan, Turkey on gas transit deal
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Summery

Azerbaijan

Political Front

- Azerbaijani draft military doctrine to be considered in Parliament

It was recommended to consider the Azerbaijani Draft Military Doctrine in the Azerbaijani Parliament. The Azerbaijani draft military doctrine has been discussed at a meeting of the Committee on Security and Defence of the Azerbaijani Parliament today.

Geo strategic Front

- Azerbaijani Speaker: No unsolved issues between Russia and Azerbaijan

Russia and Azerbaijan are strategic partners. There are no unsolved problems between them, Chairmen of the Federation Council Sergei Mironov and the Azerbaijani Parliament Oktay Asadov said at a meeting today.

- Azerbaijani MP condemns Israeli attack on Freedom Flotilla

“I share the position of Azerbaijani Foreign Ministry, Presidential Administration over the recent happenings between Israel and Turkey. I condemn what has happened. I condemn any country that causes human loss,” Member of the Azerbaijani Parliament of Jewish origin Yevda Abramov said.

- Azerbaijani foreign minister meets U.S. deputy assistant secretary of defense
Azerbaijan's Minister of Foreign Affairs Elmar Mammadyarov has met US Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Russia, Ukraine and Eurasia Celeste Wallander.

- **U.S. TO OPEN SECRET MILITARY BASE IN AZERBAIJAN?**

"The creation of military bases on Azerbaijani territory was never that serious. Although recently, some very weighty newspapers reported that this question has been decided already. I don't believe, that the U.S. will be creating any military bases in Azerbaijan", Azerbaijani military expert Uzeyir Jaffarov said, commenting on the news article published in The New York Times. Reportedly, NY Times reported that the U.S. plan to create military bases in Georgia, Turkey, Azerbaijan and Uzbekistan to carry out special military operations.

Economic /Energy Front

- **Azerbaijan To Boost Oil and Gas Production In 2010**

BAKU -- Azerbaijan's President Ilham Aliyev has told an international conference on Caspian Sea oil and natural gas development that opened in Baku that his country will produce some 52 tons of oil and 30 billion cubic meters of gas this year.

- **US presses Azerbaijan, Turkey on gas transit deal**

A senior U.S. envoy urged Azerbaijan and Turkey on Wednesday to sign a long-awaited deal he said was crucial for retaining confidence in Western plans to reduce Europe's dependence on Russian gas. Richard Morningstar, the U.S. Special Envoy for Eurasian Energy Issues, said the signing of a deal, two years in the making, would be essential to boost confidence in the European Union's ambitious Southern Corridor plan. The corridor would bypass Russia in bringing Caspian Sea gas through Turkey to Europe.

- **Azerbaijan Center for Strategic Studies hosts 'roundtable' on US energy policy in South Caucasus and Caspian region**

The Center for Strategic Studies under the Azerbaijani President has today hosted a roundtable meeting on "U.S. energy policy in the South Caucasus and Caspian region". Special Envoy of the United States Secretary of State for Eurasian Energy Richard Morningstar made a report at the event.

Social Front

- **Jailed Azerbaijani Journalist Announces Hunger Strike**

A jailed Azerbaijani journalist says he will go on hunger strike to demand authorities comply with a ruling by the European Court for Human Rights to release him from jail, RFE/RL's Azerbaijani Service reports.

- **Armenia, Azerbaijan Mark Republic Day**

Armenian leaders attend Republic Day celebrations at the Sardarapat memorial.

YEREVAN -- Armenia today marked the 92nd anniversary of the establishment of the first independent Armenian republic that emerged from the Russian Empire at the end of World War I, RFE/RL's Armenian Service reports.

- **Ecology Ministry spoke of the water level in Azerbaijan**

There was a stable level of water in rivers on the territory of Azerbaijan June 1, the Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources said.

The water level has not changed compared to the previous day on the river Kura in Yevlakh, Zardab, Salyan regions. The slight increase of water level is observed in Surra (the level is currently 881 cm) and Shirvan (781 cm) - two and one centimeter, respectively, lower level - in Banka (429 cm) - one centimeter.

- **Protest action outside Israeli embassy in Baku**

The Karabakh Freedom Organization has held a picket outside the Israeli embassy in Baku. The organization's activists chanted slogans "Israel regime should face international court" and "Killers must be punished".

Kazakhstan

Political Front

- **Kazakh President Won't Sign Draft Law On Special Powers**

The draft bill would have allowed President Nursultan Nazarbaev to retain presidential powers even if he stepped down.

- **Kazakh president rejects draft law on special powers**

ALMATY (Reuters) - Kazakh President Nursultan Nazarbayev on Thursday rejected a draft law to make him "Leader of the Nation" and grant him special powers for life if he resigned, showing he is not about to quit as head of state.

Geo strategic Front

- **Tajik National Wanted By Uzbekistan Detained In Kazakhstan**

TARAZ, Kazakhstan -- A rights organization says a Tajik citizen wanted by the Uzbek authorities for terrorism has been detained in southern Kazakhstan, RFE/RL's Kazakh Service reports.

Economic /Energy Front

- **China, Kazakh Pipeline Expansion On Hu Visit Agenda**

Chinese President Hu Jintao will sign an agreement to increase crude pipeline capacity from Central Asia during a trip to Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan next week.

Chinese assistant foreign minister Cheng Guoping told reporters in Beijing that the agreement will be part of China's efforts to diversify oil sources.

Social Front

- **Kazakh Prison Inmates Mutilate Themselves In Protest**

SHAKHTINSK, Kazakhstan -- Several inmates of Dolinka prison in Kazakhstan's central Qaraghandy Oblast have deliberately injured themselves, RFE/RL's Kazakh Service reports. The jail's warden Qaydar Sarin told RFE/RL that five prisoners had slashed open their stomachs on June 3.

Kyrgyzstan

Political Front

- **Anti-Bakiev Protesters On Hunger Strike In North Kyrgyzstan**

NARYN, Kyrgyzstan -- Seven residents of the city of Naryn in northern Kyrgyzstan have launched a hunger strike to demand that all associates of ousted former President Kurmanbek Bakiev be dismissed from official posts in the region, RFE/RL's Kyrgyz Service reports.

- **Kyrgyz Regimes Share Same Bloody Entrances, But Profoundly Different Inheritances**

In early April, when the people of Kyrgyzstan chased their president from power for the second time in five years, it appeared spasmodic regime change was becoming a permanent fixture of Kyrgyz politics.

- **Kyrgyz Demonstrators Protest Naryn Mayor's Ouster**

NARYN, Kyrgyzstan -- Supporters of the former mayor of Naryn in northern Kyrgyzstan have rallied to protest his ouster, RFE/RL's Kyrgyz Service reports.

- **Interim Leader Otunbaeva Vows Kyrgyz Elections Will Be Fair, Transparent**

Roza Otunbaeva, the acting president of Kyrgyzstan and chair of the interim government, was interviewed by RFE/RL's Kyrgyz Service in Bishkek on June 4. The interview was conducted by Burulkan Sarygulova, acting Bishkek bureau chief.

Geo strategic Front

- U.S. stops refueling tanker planes at Kyrgyzstan base

(AP) - The U.S. military has stopped refueling tanker planes at its Manas air base in Kyrgyzstan as the U.S. renegotiates fuel prices with the Kyrgyz government, officials said Tuesday.

- Kyrgyz-Uzbek borders under tension

Regional Batken administration informed NA "24.kg" they are expecting arrival of Kurmankul Matenov, the head of State Frontier Service.

Economic /Energy Front

- Politics may slow economic growth in Kyrgyzstan 2010

Economic growth of Kyrgyzstan may slow down due to politics in 2010, National Bank of the Kyrgyz Republic informs

Social Front

Tajikistan

Political Front

Geo strategic Front

- Emomali Rahmon to hold talks with Islam Karimov in Tashkent

DUSHANBE. June 4. "Asia-Plus" -- On June 10 this year Tajikistan President Emomali Rahmon will leave for Uzbekistan's capital of Tashkent to take part in a regular summit of heads of SCO member states, a reliable source in the government of Tajikistan told the AP.

- Tajik National Wanted By Uzbekistan Detained In Kazakhstan

TARAZ, Kazakhstan -- A rights organization says a Tajik citizen wanted by the Uzbek authorities for terrorism has been detained in southern Kazakhstan, RFE/RL's Kazakh Service reports.

Economic /Energy Front

Social Front

- Belarus Flies Humanitarian Aid To Tajikistan

MINSK -- Belarus dispatched 32 tons of humanitarian aid to Tajikistan by air today, RFE/RL's Belarus Service reports.

- Tajik Communists Fear Region's Largest Lenin Statue To Be Removed

KHUIJAND, Tajikistan -- Communists in northern Tajikistan say they fear authorities there are preparing to remove what is the largest Lenin statue in Central Asia, RFE/RL's Tajik Service reports.

- Tajik Islamic Party Official Accused Of Human Trafficking

KULOB, Tajikistan -- A regional leader of Tajikistan's Islamic Renaissance Party has been charged with human trafficking, RFE/RL's Tajik Service reports.

Abdulfattoh Abdukholiqov is the head of the Islamic Renaissance Party in the Vose district of Tajikistan's southern Khatlon Province.

Turkmenistan

Political Front

- The 'Worst Of The Worst' Repressive Countries

Turkmen President Gurbanguly Berdymukhammedov ranks among the heads of the most repressive countries.

Geo strategic Front

- ICRC delegation visits Turkmenistan

Deputy Head of the Regional Delegation of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) in Central Asia Françoise Blanci paid a working visit to Turkmenistan. In the framework of the visit the guest had a number of meetings in the ministries and departments of the country.

Economic /Energy Front

Social Front

- Turkmen president cruised along Avaza sea area

Turkmen president Gurbanguly Berdimuhamedov in the framework of his stay in Balkan province cruised along the coast of the seaside city on July 3, during which he familiarized himself with the progress of construction in Avaza National Tourist Zone.

- Turkmen Officials Prevent Opening Of Art Exhibit

An art exhibit in Ashgabat for a well-known Turkmen artist has been canceled by Turkmen authorities without explanation, RFE/RL's Turkmen Service reports.

Culture Minister Gulmyrat Muradov nixed the plan to show works by Tokar Tugurov on May 28 in the hall of the Union of Artists of Turkmenistan, but gave no reason for the order.

Uzbekistan

Political Front

Geo strategic Front

- Tajik National Wanted By Uzbekistan Detained In Kazakhstan

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Economic /Energy Front

- China, Kazakh Pipeline Expansion On Hu Visit Agenda

Chinese President Hu Jintao will sign an agreement to increase crude pipeline capacity from Central Asia during a trip to Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan next week.

- Uzbekistan receives new passenger locomotives from China

Two electric locomotives produced by CSR Zhuzhou Electric Locomotive Company (China) for Uzbekistan Railways were presented in Tashkent on 4 June. In accordance with the agreement signed in 2008, the Chinese company was to supply 15 high-speed passenger locomotives during 2010-2011.

Social Front

- Armored Vehicles Withdrawn From Uzbek Exclave

BATKEN, Kyrgyzstan -- Uzbekistan began withdrawing armored vehicles from an Uzbek exclave on Kyrgyz territory today, RFE/RL's Kyrgyz Service reports. The withdrawal was agreed during bilateral talks on June 1 aimed at easing tensions over the Sokh exclave near the two countries' border.

- Uzbekistan: The human rights activist Tatiana Dovlatova is being persecuted

The independent Tashkent-based human rights activist Tatiana Dovlatova, the participant of many demonstrations, the observer in the civil and criminal courts, the defender of property owners' rights, was invited for interrogation with the district investigator.

According to the invitation letter, she is incriminated "Hooliganism", the article of the Republic of Uzbekistan Criminal Code.

Detailed Report

Azerbaijan

Political Front

- Azerbaijani draft military doctrine to be considered in Parliament

It was recommended to consider the Azerbaijani Draft Military Doctrine in the Azerbaijani Parliament. The Azerbaijani draft military doctrine has been discussed at a meeting of the Committee on Security and Defence of the Azerbaijani Parliament today. Deputy Speaker, Chairman of the Committee on Security and Defence of the Azerbaijani Parliament Ziyafet Asgarov said that in accordance with the Azerbaijani Constitution Article 109 item 11, the document was submitted for discussion to President Ilham Aliyev.

The document consists of seven sections and 75 items. It deals with protecting the individual, society and state. The document reflected such issues as national security, military threat in the region, the facts of military aggression, military aggression of Armenia against Azerbaijan, real problems and challenges facing the armed forces of Azerbaijan.

The questions of the future strategy of military development, the international military cooperation, military ties, bilateral military treaties and other issues were also indicated there. Armenia is listed as an aggressor in the doctrine. The draft military doctrine reflected the issues of global crises, violent struggle being waged over energy resources, and separatism.

Members of the Committee on Security and Defence Zahid Oruj, Aydin Mirzazade, Sayavush Novruzov, Aydin Hasanov and Elman Mammadov also participated in the meeting. They emphasized that military doctrine is a long-expected document for the public. The draft military doctrine will be discussed at an extraordinary meeting of the Azerbaijani parliament.

Geo strategic Front

- Azerbaijani Speaker: No unsolved issues between Russia and Azerbaijan

Russia and Azerbaijan are strategic partners. There are no unsolved problems between them, Chairmen of the Federation Council Sergei Mironov and the Azerbaijani Parliament Oktay Asadov said at a meeting today.

"Azerbaijan is a strategic partner in the Caucasus. We are bound by a relationship of trust", Mironov said. There are no unsolved issues between Russia and Azerbaijan, Asadov said. Russia is the only neighboring country to which we have no issues, including borders," he said. The two sides drew attention to the close economic cooperation.

About 500 companies with Russian capital operate in Azerbaijan, Asadov said. He also drew attention to the fact that the republic have relations with 30 Russian regions.

In his turn, Mironov has invited Azerbaijani politicians and businessmen to visit Baikal Economic Forum in Irkutsk in September. "We will present a lot of effective investment projects of the regions there. It will help to strengthen inter-regional contacts," he said.

Asadov also stressed that Azerbaijan is paying great attention to study the Russian language. Important joint activities, including the participation of Patriarch Cyril, are held

in the country. More children have been admitted to the first forms of schools studying the Russian language for the last two years, head of the Azerbaijani Parliament said.

About 50 schools have the project of thorough studying of the Russian language. It is planned to develop this process, including the universities.

First Deputy Speaker of the Federation Council, Alexander Torshin, who heads a group of observers from the CIS Interparliamentary Assembly, thanked Azerbaijani colleagues - members of the group for their active work at the elections in the Commonwealth countries, including Ukraine. Mironov expressed readiness to send observers to the parliamentary elections in Azerbaijan November 7, suggesting "any format of observers - from the Inter-Parliamentary Assembly or the Federation Council upon the invitation and proposal of the Azerbaijani parliament. "We never play up in the assessment of the elections. We evaluate them objectively and without bias," Speaker of the Federation Council said.

- Azerbaijani MP condemns Israeli attack on Freedom Flotilla

"I share the position of Azerbaijani Foreign Ministry, Presidential Administration over the recent happenings between Israel and Turkey. I condemn what has happened. I condemn any country that causes human loss," Member of the Azerbaijani Parliament of Jewish origin Yevda Abramov said.

He says one should not hurry while assessing the happenings. According to the parliamentarian, the incident is being investigated at the highest level. Yevda Abramov noted that both sides should not succumb to emotions.

"I reiterate that I do not want anyone to be hurt, let alone death of twenty people..." he said. Abramov expressed his regret that the relations between Turkey and Israel have cooled.

"If those ships carried nothing that might damage Israel's territorial integrity and security, then Israel's action must be condemned. This incident may lay conditions for a new confrontation in the Near East. Some states may misuse it for their interests," the MP said.

"I am grateful to Azerbaijani people for my education, living conditions and achievements. You must know that I am a member of the Azerbaijan-Israel inter-parliamentary friendship group. I have to be unbiased. If I don't speak correctly, tomorrow Israeli parliament and other government agencies will not accept me. I successfully raised the problems of Azerbaijan and Turkey in Israel many times. Today some media organizations criticize Azerbaijan that it does not stand by Turkey. But Azerbaijan is always supporting Turkey".

The parliamentarian of Jewish origin gave some interesting details about the incident. According to him, those, who are talking about the incident, don't know many things. "Israeli intelligence service has some materials. They demanded a map of humanitarian aid group's route and list of cargo they carried, but they didn't meet these demands. Israel forwarded this cargo to Palestine. They should do it together. The foreign intelligence obtained information that there were several members of international terrorist groups. While landing forces entered the ship they tore their passports and threw to the sea. ...I can say only that Turkey is a powerful country. Such actions against it, are unacceptable".

- Azerbaijani foreign minister meets U.S. deputy assistant secretary of defense

Azerbaijan's Minister of Foreign Affairs Elmar Mammadyarov has met US Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Russia, Ukraine and Eurasia Celeste Wallander.

Wallander said the United State praised Azerbaijan's contribution to international anti-terrorist operations, in particular the country's efforts towards ensuring peace and stability in Afghanistan.

Mammadyarov hailed the fact "Azerbaijan and the United States enjoy close and all-round relations".

He emphasized Azerbaijan's contribution to ensuring Afghanistan's security, adding "we also assist the country in developing its humanitarian and educational fields".

- **U.S. TO OPEN SECRET MILITARY BASE IN AZERBAIJAN?**

"The creation of military bases on Azerbaijani territory was never that serious. Although recently, some very weighty newspapers reported that this question has been decided already. I dont believe, that the U.S. will be creating any military bases in Azerbaijan", Azerbaijani military expert Uzeyir Jaffarov said, commenting on the news article published in The New York Times. Reportedly, NY Times reported that the U.S. plan to create military bases in Georgia, Turkey, Azerbaijan and Uzbekistan to carry out special military operations.

"If such military bases are needed, they should be in Georgia, not in Azerbaijan. Azerbaijan being in this list, doesnt mean that those bases will actually be built here. It's a backup plan. Besides, Russia and Iran would react negatively on this decision. I dont think any military bases will be built on Azerbaijani territory anytime soon," said Jaffarov.

Russian political expert Alexei Vlasov, on his part, believes that the info about the possible installment of military bases should be checked with serious caution.

"About a year or two ago, American press also reported that the agreement on opening such military bases in Kazakhstan was reached. The information turned out to be a rumor. If however, this information proves to be true, then it can cause serious consequences, in relations with Iran for sure", said Vlasov.

"Considering developing and warm relations between Azerbaijan and Russia, I doubt that Azerbaijani government will go for those bases. Besides the dynamics of Russian-Turkish relations tell me, that this info is either wrong, or has been wrongly interpreted. However, if this proves to be right, it will cause much negativity and problems with both Russia and Iran", Vlasov concluded.

Economic /Energy Front

- **Azerbaijan To Boost Oil and Gas Production In 2010**

BAKU -- Azerbaijan's President Ilham Aliev has told an international conference on Caspian Sea oil and natural gas development that opened in Baku that his country will produce some 52 tons of oil and 30 billion cubic meters of gas this year.

Aliev said that while production figures are increasing, "extraction is now far greater than our export possibilities."

Aliev's comments come as both Russia and the European Union are trying to get Azerbaijan to ship more oil and especially gas through proposed pipelines and other export routes scheduled to start operation in the next five to six years.

Richard Morningstar, the U.S. secretary of state's special envoy for Eurasian energy, was

at the conference and said the U.S. is looking forward to Azerbaijan diversifying its energy export routes adding that would help in "enhancing energy security for consumer countries."

- US presses Azerbaijan, Turkey on gas transit deal

A senior U.S. envoy urged Azerbaijan and Turkey on Wednesday to sign a long-awaited deal he said was crucial for retaining confidence in Western plans to reduce Europe's dependence on Russian gas. Richard Morningstar, the U.S. Special Envoy for Eurasian Energy Issues, said the signing of a deal, two years in the making, would be essential to boost confidence in the European Union's ambitious Southern Corridor plan. The corridor would bypass Russia in bringing Caspian Sea gas through Turkey to Europe.

"We are encouraged by the recent progress in negotiations between Turkey and Azerbaijan," Morningstar said at a conference on Caspian Sea energy development in the Azerbaijani capital Baku.

"We are hopeful the two sides will reach an agreement sooner rather than later, so that confidence in the Southern Corridor is not undermined."

Energy-rich Azerbaijan is seen as a key potential supplier for the main component of the Southern Corridor plan to diversify gas supplies. The 3,300-kilometer Nabucco pipeline between Turkey and Austria was scheduled to be completed by 2014. Other potential elements of the plan included possible Italy-Turkey-Greece and Trans-Adriatic pipelines. The EU-backed pipeline would compete with Russia's South Stream pipeline project to meet gas demands in Europe, which already rely on Russia for a quarter of its gas supplies.

South Stream, which would channel Russian gas under the Black Sea to Bulgaria, is expected to be completed by the end of 2015. The deal between Baku and Ankara is expected to cover the price of Turkish gas imports from Azerbaijan as well as the amount Turkey charges in transit fees for Azerbaijani gas to be delivered to Europe.

- Azerbaijan Center for Strategic Studies hosts 'roundtable' on US energy policy in South Caucasus and Caspian region

The Center for Strategic Studies under the Azerbaijani President has today hosted a roundtable meeting on "U.S. energy policy in the South Caucasus and Caspian region". Special Envoy of the United States Secretary of State for Eurasian Energy Richard Morningstar made a report at the event. Discussions revolved around Azerbaijan-US relations, official Washington's Eurasian Energy strategy and prospects for energy cooperation. The meeting brought together officials of the Foreign Ministry, MPs, representatives of the diplomatic corps, and experts in regional and international relations.

Social Front

- Jailed Azerbaijani Journalist Announces Hunger Strike

A jailed Azerbaijani journalist says he will go on hunger strike to demand authorities comply with a ruling by the European Court for Human Rights to release him from jail, RFE/RL's Azerbaijani Service reports.

Eynulla Fatullayev, editor in chief of the newspaper "Realny Azerbaijan," made the announcement today in Baku's Garadag district court, where he is currently on trial on drugs charges.

Fatullayev was jailed for 8 1/2 years in 2007 for terrorism, inciting interethnic hatred, and tax evasion. He was also found guilty at a separate

trial earlier the same year of "giving wrong information" about the killings of Azerbaijani civilians in 1992 in the village of Khojaly during the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict.

On April 22, the European Court of Human Rights in Strasbourg said Azerbaijan had violated Fatullayev's rights to freedom of expression and a fair trial and called on Baku to release him. In late December 2009, prison guards at the labor camp where Fatullayev is serving his prison term found 0.22 grams of heroin in his pockets and shoes. Fatullayev says the drugs were planted by camp guards.

- Armenia, Azerbaijan Mark Republic Day

Armenian leaders attend Republic Day celebrations at the Sardarapat memorial.

YEREVAN -- Armenia today marked the 92nd anniversary of the establishment of the first independent Armenian republic that emerged from the Russian Empire at the end of World War I, RFE/RL's Armenian Service reports.

The short-lived state ceased to exist in November 1920 when its leadership in Yerevan, facing an imminent Turkish invasion, was forced to cede sovereignty to Bolshevik Russia.

Armenia regained its independence in 1991 following the collapse of the Soviet Union, of which it had been a part for nearly 70 years. "Ninety-two years ago, [the] Armenian people declared their independence on a small part of their historical territory," President Serzh Sarkisian said in an address to the country today. "Even in our own day, there are people who do not have the realization of being a citizen of the state, do not feel its strength and responsibility."

Armenia's western neighbor and regional archrival, Azerbaijan, also marked the independence of its 1918-1920 democratic republic today.

In remarks on the eve of the celebration, Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev repeated his threats that the Azerbaijani army is capable of restoring his country's territorial integrity "at any time" and "within a short term."

Azerbaijan and Armenia-backed ethnic Armenians in Nagorno-Karabakh fought a bloody war in 1991-1994 as a result of which nearly all of the enclave achieved de facto independence from Baku. Armenian forces also control considerable amounts of Azerbaijani territory adjoining Nagorno-Karabakh.

Aliyev said Azerbaijan's independence in the early 1990s was endangered by these "Armenian separatists" in Nagorno-Karabakh.

- Ecology Ministry spoke of the water level in Azerbaijan

There was a stable level of water in rivers on the territory of Azerbaijan June 1, the Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources said.

The water level has not changed compared to the previous day on the river Kura in Yevlakh, Zardab, Salyan regions. The slight increase of water level is observed in Surra (the level is currently 881 cm) and Shirvan (781 cm) - two and one centimeter, respectively, lower level - in Banka (429 cm) - one centimeter.

The water level increased by two centimeters, reaching 598 cm on the river Araz in Novruzlu compared to the previous day. The water level decreased by two centimeters, reaching 723 cm on the river Ganyh in Eyrichay.

Torrential rains and flooding of the rivers Kura and Araz caused floods in 40 districts of Azerbaijan. As a result of the disaster about 20,000 houses were flooded, more than 300 destroyed, 2,000 are in emergency condition, 50,000 hectares of cultivated land were under water.

- Protest action outside Israeli embassy in Baku

The Karabakh Freedom Organization has held a picket outside the Israeli embassy in Baku. The organization's activists chanted slogans "Israel regime should face international court" and "Killers must be punished". The protestors also chanted "Turkey-Azerbaijan" slogans. Some of the them were detained by police officers. The resolution of the picket was presented to the embassy. "Israel must apologize to world community, the culprits must be punished and Israeli embassy in Azerbaijan must be closed," the resolution said.

Kazakhstan Political Front

- Kazakh President Won't Sign Draft Law On Special Powers

The draft bill would have allowed President Nursultan Nazarbaev to retain presidential powers even if he stepped down.

Kazakh state television has broadcast a statement from President Nursultan Nazarbaev in which he says he will not sign a controversial draft law that would give him special powers for life.

Last month, the country's parliament drafted and quickly passed the bill on "Leader of the Nation" that would allow Nazarbaev to retain nearly all the powers he has as president even if he steps down from office.

The draft also guaranteed Nazarbaev immunity from investigation or prosecution and protected his property and property, as it said, "belonging to relatives living in his household" from confiscation.

In his statement, Nazarbaev referred to Kazakhstan's international obligations as a reason for not approving the draft law.

"As you know Kazakhstan now chairs the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe and a number of other regional associations," the newscaster read from the statement. "We should value this trust and carry out this honorable mission effectively. In consideration of the above-mentioned factors, I (President Nazarbaev) am asking you, dear members of parliament, to understand my position correctly as I decline to sign this legislation."

Parliament briefly debated making Nazarbaev president-for-life in September but that gradually lost support.

Nazarbaev's latest statement said he was "grateful to Kazakhstan's citizens and MPs" for their support and efforts.

Kazakh president rejects draft law on special powers

By SRI · June 3, 2010 · [Email This Post](#) · [Print This Post](#) · [Post a comment](#)

(Reuters) - Kazakh President Nursultan Nazarbayev on Thursday rejected a draft law to make him "Leader of the Nation" and grant him special powers for life if he resigned, showing he is not about to quit as head of state.

- Kazakh president rejects draft law on special powers

ALMATY (Reuters) - Kazakh President Nursultan Nazarbayev on Thursday rejected a draft law to make him "Leader of the Nation" and grant him special powers for life if he resigned, showing he is not about to quit as head of state.

The draft law, proposed by parliament last month, would grant Nazarbayev immunity from prosecution and control over some government policy should he resign. Analysts say this could have paved the way for him to appoint a pliant successor.

But Nazarbayev, 69, said in a televised address that he would not sign the law. He cited the Central Asian state's chairmanship of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) among his reasons for rejecting the bill.

"I sincerely thank all Kazakh citizens for your support and your evaluation of my work. At the same time, I think the status of 'Leader of the Nation' cannot be acquired simply on the basis of the letter of the law, decrees and other legal acts," he said.

The absence of a clear successor to Nazarbayev, who has ruled Kazakhstan for two decades, is the biggest worry for investors who have poured over \$100 billion into Central Asia's largest economy since it broke from the Soviet Union in 1991. Nazarbayev's current term in office expires in 2012 but he can run for an indefinite number of terms according to a law introduced by his party in 2007. "Many among Kazakhstan's elite believed that, by accepting this law, the head of state would have laid the foundations for leaving the presidency," said Andrei Chebotaryov, director of the Alternative think tank in Almaty.

"He has given a clear signal that he is staying."

VOTE

Parliament, however, has still to vote on the law. According to the constitution, the president's decision could be overruled should three-quarters of deputies in each house of parliament vote in favor. "I ask you, dear parliamentary deputies, to have a proper understanding of my position with regard to my refusal to sign these laws put in front of me," Nazarbayev said.

The countries of ex-Soviet Central Asia have yet to see a transition of power that does not involve a revolution or the death of a leader. A violent revolt ousted Kurmanbek Bakiyev in April as president of neighboring Kyrgyzstan.

Parliament, which has no opposition deputies, had begun work on the first law that would have provided Nazarbayev with some control over government policy after leaving the presidency. By retaining some power, he would theoretically have been able to ease his chosen successor into power, analysts said.

The law would also have given Nazarbayev immunity from criminal prosecution for any actions taken while in office and protected all assets of the president and his family.

Nazarbayev was speaking in Almaty, Kazakhstan's financial capital, after attending an investment forum where he revealed the resource-rich country's economy grew by more than 7 percent in the first four months of the year.

In his address on state television, he said Kazakhstan's role as chair of the OSCE, as well as several other regional bodies, was partly behind his reason to reject the draft law.

"We should value such trust and carry out such an esteemed mission in a worthy manner," he said.

Rights groups have criticized the West for allowing Kazakhstan to take the rotating chair this year of the OSCE, Europe's main security and human rights watchdog.

"The president seems to be creating an image of himself as a democratically minded head of state," said Chebotaryov. "It's a message to the international community of why Kazakhstan is heading the OSCE."

Geo strategic Front

- Tajik National Wanted By Uzbekistan Detained In Kazakhstan

TARAZ, Kazakhstan -- A rights organization says a Tajik citizen wanted by the Uzbek authorities for terrorism has been detained in southern Kazakhstan, RFE/RL's Kazakh Service reports.

Vitaly Ponomarev of the Moscow-based human rights watchdog Memorial told RFE/RL on June 1 that Umarali Abdurakhmonov was detained in the town of Taraz on May 21. Ponomarev said Memorial had learned of the detention from an associate of Abdurakhmonov who had traveled to Moscow and visited the rights group. There's been no official confirmation that Abdurakhmonov is in Kazakh custody.

But a lawyer representing Kazakhstan's Bureau for Human Rights in Taraz told RFE/RL on June 1 that Abdurakhmonov is currently being held at the detention center in the Merke district of southern Zhambyl Oblast. Ruslan Khalidov said Abdurakhmonov will be transferred to a detention center in Taraz on June 5. He added that Abdurakhmonov has officially asked for political asylum in Kazakhstan. Abdurakhmonov is wanted in Uzbekistan for conspiracy and for his alleged participation in the activities of banned religious organizations.

The Uzbek authorities launched a search for Abdurakhmonov in March 2004 after terrorist acts in Tashkent that killed three people and injured over 20.

In September 2004, a court in Tashkent found 33 citizens of Tajikistan and Uzbekistan guilty of perpetrating the attacks and sentenced them to long terms in jail. An international search was announced for six more suspects, including Abdurakhmonov.

Ponomarev said that about two years ago, Abdurakhmonov applied for refugee status at the UN Office in Moscow but was refused.

He said that Abdurakhmonov could face torture and an unfair trial if extradited to Uzbekistan.

Economic /Energy Front

- China, Kazakh Pipeline Expansion On Hu Visit Agenda

Chinese President Hu Jintao will sign an agreement to increase crude pipeline capacity from Central Asia during a trip to Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan next week.

Chinese assistant foreign minister Cheng Guoping told reporters in Beijing that the agreement will be part of China's efforts to diversify oil sources.

The Sino-Kazakh line accounts for roughly 4 percent of China's total crude imports, which hit a record high of more than 5 million barrels per day in April.

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Social Front

- Kazakh Prison Inmates Mutilate Themselves In Protest

SHAKHTINSK, Kazakhstan -- Several inmates of Dolinka prison in Kazakhstan's central Qaraghandy Oblast have deliberately injured themselves, RFE/RL's Kazakh Service reports. The jail's warden Qaydar Sarin told RFE/RL that five prisoners had slashed open their stomachs on June 3.

He said that the prisoners were hospitalized in the town of Shakhtinsk and that their current status is stable. Kazakh human rights activist Vadim Kuramshin, who has been monitoring the situation in Dolinka for some time, told RFE/RL that the prisoners were protesting the way they were treated by prison guards. Kuramshin said he was informed about the incident by Galina Karaush, the mother of one of the prisoners in question, Yevgeny Karaush.

Kyrgyzstan Political Front

- Anti-Bakiev Protesters On Hunger Strike In North Kyrgyzstan

NARYN, Kyrgyzstan -- Seven residents of the city of Naryn in northern Kyrgyzstan have launched a hunger strike to demand that all associates of ousted former President Kurmanbek Bakiev be dismissed from official posts in the region, RFE/RL's Kyrgyz Service reports. Bakiev was ousted after mass protests on April 7 and fled the country, initially to Kazakhstan. He is currently in Belarus at the invitation of Belarusian President Alyaksandr Lukashenka. One of the protesters, Kanayim Berdibaeva, told RFE/RL that the hunger strikers will continue their protest for three days in Naryn. Then, if their demands are not met, they will march to Bishkek.

Naryn Deputy Mayor Chynara Abdraimova met with the hunger strikers but failed to dissuade them from their protest.

Meanwhile, the acting governor of Naryn Oblast, Adyl Esenbekov, told RFE/RL that political forces interested in "creating obstacles to holding a referendum on the country's new constitution" might be behind the hunger strikers. The referendum is scheduled for June 27.

Features

- Kyrgyz Regimes Share Same Bloody Entrances, But Profoundly Different Inheritances

In early April, when the people of Kyrgyzstan chased their president from power for the second time in five years, it appeared spasmodic regime change was becoming a permanent fixture of Kyrgyz politics.

But while there are similarities in the root causes of the March 2005 Tulip Revolution that ushered in Kurmanbek Bakiev's presidency, and the bloody unrest that led to his ouster, there are also stark differences in the way things are playing out. And for Kyrgyzstan's newest incoming government, it basically comes down to a matter of trust. Or more precisely, a lack thereof.

Kyrgyzstan's political opposition played minor roles in both regime changes. Events in both cases moved so quickly that no political opposition group could direct events, although their calls for the resignations of the presidents surely fueled the flames.

Patience Exhausted

The source of popular discontent with both Bakiev's government and that of former President Askar Akaev was blatant corruption and nepotism. The patience of the people was simply exhausted.

"The similarities are that, both in 2005 and 2010, these were people's uprisings," says Erica Marat, who has written about Kyrgyzstan for the Washington-based think tank Freedom House. "People went into the streets to demand better government. Basically, they protested against the corrupt regime. They were frustrated with their living standards."

In the case of Bakiev's ouster in April, the president was chased from the capital, Bishkek, on April 7, less than 48 hours after a riot in one western city.

Former President Askar AkaevThe opposition had been calling on people to participate in an unsanctioned nationwide rally on April 7. They wanted to protest steep rises in electricity costs; the reported misuse of a large Russian loan meant to ease the country's power problems; state posts being given to Bakiev's immediate relatives; and Bakiev's drastic change in the structure of the government without public debate or even the necessary constitutional amendments. But it was reports that opposition leader Bolot Sherniyazov had been detained in the northwestern city of Talas on April 6 that suddenly prompted crowds there to seize the local administration building.

When the crowd held the building overnight, despite the building being stormed by special police, the protests spread to the capital, Bishkek, in the north. People clashed with police outside the government building the morning of April 7, and by that night Bakiev and his security team were crashing their way through blockades to Manas airport in an effort to escape.

The rioting that forced Bakiev to flee was confined to two cities. More than 80 people were killed in barely 24 hours.

The Georgian, Ukrainian Scenario

Marat explains that things were different going into the 2005 Tulip Revolution.

"The March 2005 events -- demonstrations -- began across the country well ahead of March 24, when the regime led by Askar Akaev was ousted," Marat says. "Again, it was expected and unexpected. Nobody expected that Akaev would flee the country so fast, the first day after demonstrators came to Bishkek on March 24. People expected [events] to follow more the Georgian and Ukrainian scenario, where the opposition is waiting for several days and pressuring the government for several days."

The discontent that led to the 2005 revolution started right after the new year. Rumors spread of a "secret meeting" the country's prime minister had held with regional and electoral officials, where they discussed ways to ensure that pro-Akaev candidates won seats in parliamentary elections scheduled for late February. These rumors gained credence on January 6 when popular opposition figure Roza Otunbaeva, the current leader of Kyrgyzstan's provisional government, and later other opposition figures were barred by the Central Election Committee from competing in those elections.

Otunbaeva was running for a seat in the same district as Akaev's daughter, Bermet, who was registered as a candidate. Pro-Akaev candidates won nearly all the seats decided in the first round of voting on February 27.

Peaceful protests that started days before the first round became more aggressive. The administration building in Jalal-Abad that has figured so prominently in Kyrgyz events since Bakiev was chased from power was also the first major building that protesters occupied in the country in 2005. Many of the protesters from the south came to Bishkek in the last days leading up to the storming of the government building in Bishkek. After Akaev fled the country, many people in the south had the impression that Akaev's ouster was the result of a countrywide effort, but one in which the south had played a particularly key role.

South-North Unity

Marat notes that Bakiev, who is from southern Kyrgyzstan, was quick to address the potential north-south divide and ease concerns.

"Bakiev was very proactive in maintaining south-north unity in his first year of presidency," Marat says.

Omurbek Tekebaev (right), Roza Otunbaeva (center), and Almazbek Atambaev -- the heads of the current Kyrgyz interim government. That differs greatly from the approach of the current provisional government, which has repeatedly called for unity and stressed Kyrgyzstan is one country but has been unable to convince some in the south that this is true. Opposition leaders such as Otunbaeva and interim government deputy chairmen Omurbek Tekebaev and Azimbek Beknazarov are from the south. But so far they have been unable to appeal successfully for calm in the Jalal-Abad area. Bakiev went there after fleeing Bishkek, initially causing tensions between his supporters and opponents in the area. Later, a problem broke out between the local ethnic Kyrgyz and Uzbeks.

As Marat explains, this is perhaps because this new government has not been able to inspire in the people the same sense of confidence seen after the 2005 revolution.

"The biggest difference between 2005 and 2010 in the aftermaths of regime change is, of course, people's trust in the new government. Bakiev enjoyed widespread, almost unanimous, trust among his political supporters inside his government and among the society, and this public trust lasted for some time. It lasted for a few months until presidential elections in July 2005," Marat says.

"Whereas the current government does not enjoy this privilege and the public is very skeptical about its potential to democratize the country and to fight corruption. Within the provisional government now, we see that members of that government do not trust each other."

All Was Forgiven

Outside Kyrgyzstan there are similar concerns.

"Five years ago, Kyrgyzstan was considered to be the third country in the former Soviet space that underwent what back then was considered to be a democratic regime change," Marat continues. "It was the third country after Ukraine and Georgia where a similar change occurred after unfree elections. "Because of that euphoria after the Georgian and Ukrainian revolutions, Kyrgyzstan was supported by the international community. Kyrgyzstan was put in the same basket as Georgia and Ukraine.

Relatives grieve in Safarovka, outside Jalalabad, on May 16 during the funeral of a person killed during clashes between Bakiev supporters and the interim government." And for the international as for the local civil society community, whatever mistakes were made by the Bakiev regime and whatever inefficient policies were implemented by the Bakiev regime, it was all forgiven because back then both the international community and the local civil society organizations believed that in a longer-term perspective this is all for the better and that this democratic change will eventually result in a more open society, in a more democratic government."

Marat said foreign governments are more cautious this time around.

"Now Otunbaeva's government is treated with very cautious optimism, if optimism at all," Marat says. "It's approached very cautiously by European and Western partners, organizations, and governments because of the fear of repetition of what we saw happening with the Bakiev regime."

Nearly two months after assuming power, Kyrgyzstan's interim government has yet to be officially recognized by any other government.

Bakiev's government also benefited from an unexpected respite, and also outside support, some six weeks after it came to power when unrest erupted just over the border in Uzbekistan. The Uzbek government's use of deadly force to reestablish order in Andijon sent a wave of refugees across the border into Kyrgyzstan. The UN and humanitarian organizations were sympathetic to the situation of the fledgling government and helped out materially and financially. The event also diverted domestic attention from Kyrgyzstan's economic and social problems, giving Bakiev's government extra time to deal with pressing issues.

There is an important similarity between the two regime changes in the way they were received by Kyrgyzstan's Central Asian neighbors. It is clear that the long-entrenched leaders in Kazakhstan, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan see the revolts as a bad precedent. Kazakhstan closed its border with Kyrgyzstan for weeks after crowds chased Bakiev from power. Uzbekistan still hasn't opened its border with Kyrgyzstan.

And Kazakh President Nursultan Nazarbaev has clearly expressed the conformity of his views of the two revolutions. Following the 2005 overthrow, Nazarbaev said that "what happened [in Kyrgyzstan] cannot be called a revolution. According to [Kyrgyzstan's] current leaders, it was banditry and pillage." The 2010 overthrow, he said, was "the result of complete banditry."

A comparison of the two regime changes highlights the inability of the Akaev and the Bakiev governments to sufficiently improve the lives of Kyrgyzstan's people. This, when coupled with the unusual success enjoyed by close relatives of the presidents, proved too much for Kyrgyzstan's people, and reveals a line that should not be crossed.

- **Kyrgyz Demonstrators Protest Naryn Mayor's Ouster**

NARYN, Kyrgyzstan -- Supporters of the former mayor of Naryn in northern Kyrgyzstan have rallied to protest his ouster, RFE/RL's Kyrgyz Service reports.

About 30 supporters of Almaz Kulmatov picketed the Naryn provincial governor's office today, some holding placards saying: "We support Mayor Almaz Kulmatov!" "Respect the rule of law!" and "Yes to the interim government!"

Several dozen young activists forced their way into Kulmatov's office on June 2 and forced him to sign a letter of resignation because he had served as mayor under now-ousted President Kurmanbek Bakiev.

Earlier this week, seven youth activists started a hunger strike in Naryn to demand the dismissal of all officials who worked in public offices and state bodies when Bakiev was president.

Naryn Governor Adyl Esenbekov met with the picketers today and explained to them that nobody else in the mayor's office will be sacked. He said that Kulmatov resigned of his own volition.

- **Interim Leader Otunbaeva Vows Kyrgyz Elections Will Be Fair, Transparent**

Roza Otunbaeva, the acting president of Kyrgyzstan and chair of the interim government, was interviewed by RFE/RL's Kyrgyz Service in Bishkek on June 4. The interview was conducted by Burulkan Sarygulova, acting Bishkek bureau chief.

RFE/RL: Three weeks remain until the June 27 constitutional referendum in Kyrgyzstan. What is the interim government's main focus during the run up to the vote?

Roza Otunbaeva: First we established a headquarters to help to the Central Election Commission here. The head of the headquarters, Omurbek Tekebaev [the leader of the

Ata Meken Socialist Party and the deputy head of the interim government] gathered all the governors and we discussed...the organizational issues. A lot of preparatory work will be carried out. This includes putting banners and billboards about the referendum in cities, towns, villages [and] clarifying voter lists. We have about 3,155,000 voters according to the 2009 data. We need to check whether we have that amount of voters, or not. The migration process has been high in Kyrgyzstan. Besides that, some voters might have gone to rural areas for the summer, and some to resort places with their children.

Once this work is done, we will have objective conditions for a fair referendum. A lot of international observers are coming to Kyrgyzstan. The OSCE alone is sending about 300 observers. About six members of the Central Election Commission are coming with a UN mandate. It means there will be a lot of observers, a lot of different eyes watching us.

RFE/RL: Why did you give your consent to be president during the transition period without the right to challenge possible contenders in the presidential election? Why did you decide not to run for the presidency after the transition period? Some human rights activists have been critical of this move, and say your rights were abused.

Otunbaeva: Our society is in a very tough situation. We have witnessed a lot of very important events. We have a lot of differing ideas now. A lot of alternate opinions, a lot of political ambitions. We are living in a special climate. There had to be two elections: presidential and parliamentary. We had to hold a referendum as well. These are three important tests for our society.

We will hold the referendum on 27 June and with help of God, we will adopt our constitution. It would be a great step forward for us. Then a lot of political parties are preparing themselves for the general elections by holding their congresses, and organizing blocs, and signing agreements. It's said we have about 100 political parties, and more are always emerging.

People were greatly concerned that the organization of the elections should be peaceful. They felt that first, the country should get a new constitution, then a new parliament, after that a new president. The situation has been tense nowadays. You see the recent events in the south. You heard about events in the north, including the town of Naryn. Given these events, the interim government decided to hold only parliamentary elections in the fall and postpone presidential elections for one or two years. After the referendum, the focus will turn to the general election. Most political leaders will be leading their parties in pre-election campaigns.

We made these decisions at the People's Congress on March 17. Someone has to stay in power to do the work that the congress gave us. That is why I am staying here, to reach our goals. That is why we postponed the presidential elections until we are past this dangerous time. People have supported the idea despite criticism by a few politicians.

RFE/RL: But do you think you have been stripped of your ability to be elected in future presidential elections?

Otunbaeva: I don't think so, because the interests of our country and our nation are more important [than my own personal ambitions]. I would say of the opponents who are criticizing us from the sidelines -- saying that we are trying to develop new terms of power -- that they were serving [ousted former Presidents] Askar Akaev and Kurmanbek Bakiev.

We are trying to get our nation out of a severe crisis. If they are eager to win the presidency, there will be an opportunity in a year and a half. I'm not offering my candidacy for the presidential elections. I am just a part of the transition scheme to transfer society from the old 2007 constitution to the new 2010 constitution.

RFE/RL: How will you work with your opponents during the transition period?

Otunbaeva: We are working on that. Today, we are holding a consultative council under the interim government, which we also held two weeks ago. We invited representatives of political parties and nongovernmental organizations, several intellectuals and staff members of our official bodies. Among them are [former Prime Minister] Amangeldi Muraliev and [Communist Party leader] Iskhak Masaliev.

We are appealing to them by saying, 'There are no losers or winners of the events that happened April 7. We have asked the nation for only six months to transition society from Bakiev's epoch to a new one. We are all trying our best to do that, but we need your help and advice. Please, don't just criticize us, and give us your help.'

All of us are citizens of the Kyrgyz Republic. That is why we established a Consultative Council. We need to integrate people and political groups and they need to negotiate with each other. We need a dialogue and talks to avoid tensions.

RFE/RL: There have been protest rallies in the Jalal-Abad region and a border incident in the Batken region. There were rallies in the town of Naryn recently. Do you think that there won't be tensions during the referendum? What kinds of measures are being carried out by your government to keep the peace?

Otunbaeva: The ongoing rallies have showed that we have problems from years and years. They have their own history and reasons. For instance, the issue in the Batken region [border area] has been resolved. The problems related to the Sokh enclave of Uzbekistan, which accumulated over several years, have been resolved.

In Naryn, protesters were angry at officials left over from Akaev and Bakiev's regimes and there were demands to dismiss all of them. We need a kind of a lustration process in Kyrgyzstan. The Baltic States had regulations that limited for 10 years the hiring of former [communist] officials. We don't use such a tool because we are a very tiny society. We cannot afford to divide our society in such a way. There have been good professionals among the former officials. We cannot resolve all the issues in the way of the 1917 [Bolshevik Revolution].

RFE/RL: Are you losing the ideology battle with the public? Some observers say you might be.

Otunbaeva: Maybe. We have shortcomings in that respect. We need to work on that.

RFE/RL: How you should work on that?

Otunbaeva: We need to work with newspapers and TV media outlets. As a government ... we have not had enough time to [get information out to people]. For instance, there was a scandal about the so-called "Telephone-gate." (A mobile phone conversation between members of the interim government was made public in which the secret use of money was discussed).

We, the members of the interim government, promised each other that we would be open and direct in resolving every issue. Yesterday, someone delivered me a copy of the independent newspaper, "Asman" [Sky] which contained an article. "This is about you, and [it alleges] that you bought a house in England,' the person told me. I have a duty to respond to that. My daughter lives in London together with her husband and they have

their house there. But the allegations that Roza Otunbaeva has a house in London are not true.

Radio Azattyk: What about international relations under the interim government? Will there be any big changes there?

Otunbaeva: I wouldn't say that there are big changes. All the international organizations are closely working with us. Even though we are still regarded as illegitimate, the international financial institutions are promising to help us. The Islamic Bank yesterday offered about 1 million US to reconstruct the Naryn-Torugart highway (which leads to China). It is a good thing. On July 8, there will be a big donor's conference. Regarding [help from] countries, Russia is helping us a lot. Recently, Russia gave us 20 thousand tons of fuel and thousand of [their] best [agricultural] seeds as a form of humanitarian aid. We are working closely with Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan. I think we have resolved the Sokh enclave issue, and this is a sign of good relations with Uzbekistan.

RFE/RL: After the general elections, there will presumably be a shift in power, to the parliament, which is in contrast to other post-Soviet countries in the region. What do you think we'll see then in terms of Kyrgyzstan's foreign policy?

Otunbaeva: The foreign policy would be defined by the government, not by the president. All the most important issues would be sent to the parliament. However, there won't be big changes in Kyrgyzstan's foreign relations. We have already established our core system of foreign relations. First, good relations with our neighbors. Next, relations with big strategic partner countries. Russia is also critically important for us among our neighbors. The other big countries are China, America, the West and all the European [Union] states.

At the same time, we have good relations with the Arabic countries in recent years. The Southeast Asia countries are also helping us a lot. I think we won't drastically change our foreign policy.

RFE/RL: Do you have any update on what's happening with the U.S. transit center at Manas?

Otunbaeva: We are resolving the issue related to the center. Our government, after deep consideration, has held several talks with the Americans on the firms which dealt with the fuel supply for the center. We are going to eliminate all the existing corruption scheme by nationalization of the Aalam Service company. There will be no way for mediating companies [to take advantage]. Our government can deal with the direct fuel supply. Now everything will be defined in forthcoming negotiations [with the U.S.]. We strongly believe that all the money that was previously sent to the family (of former president Kurmanbek Bakiev) will be added to our state budget.

RFE/RL: Does the U.S. correctly understand the issues and the action you're taking?

Otunbaeva: Yes, they understand it in correct way. The U.S. Congress has held a wide debate on that. They are saying, "Why should we support such a corruption scheme?" and they are agreeing to find ways to...find corruption abuses. [Some] American scholars testified before members of Congress about how the process used to work, and asked why the United States was supporting such a corrupt system [at Manas]. Now, from both directions, we are on the same wavelength in terms of our desire to resolve the issue.

RFE/RL: There will be a summit of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization in Tashkent on June 10-11. Will Kyrgyzstan be represented?

Otunbaeva: Yes. Our minister of foreign affairs will be attending the summit.

Geo strategic Front

- U.S. stops refueling tanker planes at Kyrgyzstan base

(AP) - The U.S. military has stopped refueling tanker planes at its Manas air base in Kyrgyzstan as the U.S. renegotiates fuel prices with the Kyrgyz government, officials said Tuesday.

US stops refueling tanker planes at key base

US stops refueling tanker planes supporting Afghan war in price dispute at key transit base

The U.S. military has stopped refueling tanker planes at its Manas air base in Kyrgyzstan as the U.S. renegotiates fuel prices with the Kyrgyz government, officials said Tuesday. Pentagon spokesman Bryan Whitman and other U.S. military officials said flights continue to ferry military personnel and supplies to and from Afghanistan through Manas.

But in an effort to conserve fuel, officials said, the tanker planes used to refuel aircraft operating over the battlefields of Afghanistan are no longer stopping at Manas. Instead, the tankers are going elsewhere to pick up fuel.

"We are currently in discussions with the interim government to determine the optimal way to procure fuel in the future," Air Force Maj. John A. Elolf, a spokesman at the base said. "We have taken steps to conserve fuel at the transit center until the discussions are complete."

Operations at the base, which opened in December 2001, have long been the source of tension between the U.S. and Kyrgyzstan, a former Soviet republic. Several times, the Kyrgyz government appeared to be on the verge of closing it.

Last year, the government of former President Kurmanbek Bakiyev said it would terminate the lease. Kyrgyzstan later agreed to allow U.S. forces to stay after the annual rent was raised to about \$63 million from \$17 million.

A bloody uprising that culminated in the toppling of Bakiyev in early April again threw the future of Manas into doubt. But the interim government announced it would allow the base to remain open for another year when the current lease expires in July.

There were fresh tensions with Washington when Kyrgyz prosecutors alleged that companies owned by Bakiyev's son avoided almost \$80 million in taxes on aviation fuel sold to Manas base.

Domestic and international critics suggested the U.S. may have turned a blind eye to irregularities in the fuel supply procedure to ensure the future of the base.

The Obama administration has pledged to ensure greater transparency in the supply of aviation fuel to Manas.

- Kyrgyz-Uzbek borders under tension

Regional Batken administration informed NA "24.kg" they are expecting arrival of Kurmankul Matenov, the head of State Frontier Service.

By officials of Batken administration standoff between allied settlements – Kyrgyz village Sogment and Uzbek village Husher continues. By their data there are more than 300 residents of Sogment and 1.5 thousands inhabitants of Husher in the epicenter. Citizens of Uzbekistan demand to leave them pastures while Kyrgyz are against that.

In past weekends confrontation was ready to blast as officials of Batken district administration noted. Occupants of Husher broke dozen of cars belonging to countrymen of Sogment and destroyed plumbing systems of the village so approximately 400 people were left without irrigation water. Now confronting sides are waiting for acting head of State Frontier Service KR Kurmankul Matenov.

Officials confirm information about coming additional military forces to Uzbek enclave Soh. However, the military of

Economic /Energy Front

- Politics may slow economic growth in Kyrgyzstan 2010

Economic growth of Kyrgyzstan may slow down due to politics in 2010, National Bank of the Kyrgyz Republic informs.

Reportedly, at present moment there is a threat coming from decline of Gross Domestic Product. Moreover GDP growth in 2010 may hit by, according to National Bank, 2 percent.

National Bank management says in 2010 might reduced real income among natural and legal persons. This may lead to negative effect of financial standing in credit establishments.

In this connection, specialists suggest financial institutions of the country to overview its credit policy and cut down interest rates. The government, in its turn, shall take prompt measures on support of the economy. Besides, they expressed concern over imbalance in central government budget 2010 and increase in the cost of internal debt maintenance.

Social Front

Tajikistan

Political Front

Geo strategic Front

- Emomali Rahmon to hold talks with Islam Karimov in Tashkent

DUSHANBE. June 4. "Asia-Plus" -- On June 10 this year Tajikistan President Emomali Rahmon will leave for Uzbekistan's capital of Tashkent to take part in a regular summit of heads of SCO member states, a reliable source in the government of Tajikistan told the AP.

According to the source, Tajik President will be accompanied by President Adviser for International Affairs Erkin Rahmatulloev, Tajik Foreign Minister Hamrohon Zarifi, Tajik Interior Minister Abdurahim Kaharov and other officials.

"In the course of his official visit to Tashkent Tajik leader will hold bilateral talks with Chinese President Hu Jintao and his Uzbek counterpart Islam Karimov," the source said, adding that Emomali Rahmon may also meet with leaders of other SCO member states in bilateral format.

Many Tajik experts believe that the talks between heads of Tajikistan and Uzbekistan can settle many problems between Dushanbe and Tashkent which accumulated in the past years.

- Tajik National Wanted By Uzbekistan Detained In Kazakhstan

TARAZ, Kazakhstan -- A rights organization says a Tajik citizen wanted by the Uzbek authorities for terrorism has been detained in southern Kazakhstan, RFE/RL's Kazakh Service reports.

Vitaly Ponomarev of the Moscow-based human rights watchdog Memorial told RFE/RL on June 1 that Umarali Abdurakhmonov was detained in the town of Taraz on May 21. Ponomarev said Memorial had learned of the detention from an associate of Abdurakhmonov who had traveled to Moscow and visited the rights group. There's been no official confirmation that Abdurakhmonov is in Kazakh custody.

But a lawyer representing Kazakhstan's Bureau for Human Rights in Taraz told RFE/RL on June 1 that Abdurakhmonov is currently being held at the detention center in the Merke district of southern Zhambyl Oblast.

Ruslan Khalidov said Abdurakhmonov will be transferred to a detention center in Taraz on June 5. He added that Abdurakhmonov has officially asked for political asylum in Kazakhstan.

Abdurakhmonov is wanted in Uzbekistan for conspiracy and for his alleged participation in the activities of banned religious organizations.

The Uzbek authorities launched a search for Abdurakhmonov in March 2004 after terrorist acts in Tashkent that killed three people and injured over 20.

In September 2004, a court in Tashkent found 33 citizens of Tajikistan and Uzbekistan guilty of perpetrating the attacks and sentenced them to long terms in jail. An international search was announced for six more suspects, including Abdurakhmonov.

Ponomarev said that about two years ago, Abdurakhmonov applied for refugee status at the UN Office in Moscow but was refused.

He said that Abdurakhmonov could face torture and an unfair trial if extradited to Uzbekistan.

Economic /Energy Front

Social Front

- Belarus Flies Humanitarian Aid To Tajikistan

MINSK -- Belarus dispatched 32 tons of humanitarian aid to Tajikistan by air today, RFE/RL's Belarus Service reports.

The aid, mainly food, clothes, and blankets, is headed for those regions of Tajikistan recently hit by landslides and floods.

Vital Navitski, the press secretary of the Belarusian Ministry for Emergency Situations, told RFE/RL that the humanitarian aid is worth 500 million Belarusian rubles (\$166,500). He said this is not the first humanitarian aid sent by Minsk to Tajikistan. Belarus provided similar aid in 1999, 2008, and 2009.

"Tajikistan was hit by an earthquake in January, then recently some regions suffered from floods and landslides. The Tajik government asked the Belarusian government for help, which we are now providing," Navitski said.

Tajik authorities say 12 people died in floods in the south of the country last month, though locals say the death toll is much higher.

- Tajik Communists Fear Region's Largest Lenin Statue To Be Removed

KHUIJAND, Tajikistan -- Communists in northern Tajikistan say they fear authorities there are preparing to remove what is the largest Lenin statue in Central Asia, RFE/RL's Tajik Service reports.

The head of the Communist Party in Sughd province, Ghufron Rustamov, told RFE/RL that authorities have what he called a verbal order from Dushanbe to remove the statue of Vladimir Lenin from the center of the city of Khujand.

But the head of Khujand's city architecture department, Olimjon Haidarov, said access to the monument had been restricted this week because of renovation work being carried out on the square and the monument itself, which has not been renovated in many years.

Rustamov said any move to remove or relocate the statue should only be done after public debate. He noted that recently a small monument to Lenin had disappeared from the center of Sughd's Ayni district.

The Lenin statue in the center of Khujand on the right bank of the Syrdarya River was built in 1974 and at 24 meters high is believed to be the biggest monument to the Bolshevik revolutionary leader in Central Asia.

In Soviet times Khujand was called Leninabad and Sughd was called Leninabad province. After a referendum in 1990 Khujand reverted to its historic name; Sughd followed suit in 2001.

- **Tajik Islamic Party Official Accused Of Human Trafficking**

KULOB, Tajikistan -- A regional leader of Tajikistan's Islamic Renaissance Party has been charged with human trafficking, RFE/RL's Tajik Service reports.

Abdulfattoh Abdukholiqov is the head of the Islamic Renaissance Party in the Vose district of Tajikistan's southern Khatlon Province.

Davlat Najmiddinov, who heads the anti-organized-crime department in the province's Kulob district, told RFE/RL that Abdukholiqov and his accomplice paid \$500 to the mother of a 16-year-old girl whom they planned to sell to someone in Russia.

Najmiddinov said the girl was found at Abdukholiqov's house last month with travel documents and an air ticket from Dushanbe to the Russian city of Yekaterinburg.

But Abdukholiqov told RFE/RL that the girl was his relative and that he was trying to help her by arranging her marriage in Russia.

Abdukholiqov added that the \$500 was the bride price, which should be paid to any Muslim girl by her future husband.

Najmiddinov rejected Abdukholiqov's explanation. He said that the girl's sister was sold to a Tajik businessman in Kazakhstan and lived there as his second wife, but the authorities sent her back to Tajikistan.

The girls' mother, Toji Valieva, told RFE/RL that her husband has spent 28 years in prison and that it was not easy to feed and raise seven children on her own.

She said she thought marrying her daughters at a young age was preferable to risking an uncertain future for them.

The Islamic Renaissance Party has not yet commented on the allegations against Abdukholiqov.

Turkmenistan Political Front

- **The 'Worst Of The Worst' Repressive Countries**

Turkmen President Gurbanguly Berdymukhammedov ranks among the heads of the most repressive countries.

Freedom House, an international independent organization monitoring democracy and human rights, today released its report titled "Worst of the Worst: The World's Most Repressive Societies."

Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan joined countries Burma, North Korea, and Somalia on the list of the 10 worst countries in the world.

In a press release, the organization's director of advocacy, Paul Schriefer, said the list reflects Freedom House's views of "countries where individuals have almost no opportunity to enjoy the most fundamental rights; regimes whose people experience heavy penalties for independent thought or action, and where little or no opposition activity is permitted to exist."

A list of eight countries that scored only slightly better than the "worst of the worst" included Belarus, China, Cuba, and Saudi Arabia.

Geo strategic Front

- ICRC delegation visits Turkmenistan

Deputy Head of the Regional Delegation of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) in Central Asia Françoise Blanci paid a working visit to Turkmenistan. In the framework of the visit the guest had a number of meetings in the ministries and departments of the country.

The Deputy Head of the ICRC Regional Delegation in Central Asia was received in the Turkmen National Institute for Democracy and Human Rights under the President of Turkmenistan, Civil Service Academy under the President of Turkmenistan and Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the country. During the visit, the guest also had a meeting in the National Red Crescent Society of Turkmenistan.

According to the Turkmenistan.ru correspondent, who is referring to the official release, in the course of meetings, the sides exchanged opinions regarding the build-up of positive cooperation with this biggest international organization.

Economic /Energy Front

Social Front

- Turkmen president cruised along Avaza sea area

Turkmen president Gurbanguly Berdimuhamedov in the framework of his stay in Balkan province cruised along the coast of the seaside city on July 3, during which he familiarized himself with the progress of construction in Avaza National Tourist Zone.

As the Turkmenistan.ru correspondent reports referring to the press-service of the head of state, the Turkmen leader examined the pace of construction in Avaza on board of yacht and instructed the ministers accompanying him to keep under control all construction works in the resort and in the tourist industry as a whole. As the president noted, it is especially important in the summer period when the season of vacations starts and many people come here with their families and children to rest.

Having gone ashore Gurbanguly Berdimuhamedov together with the government members took part in the bicycle race and sailed on a high-speed water motorbike. "There are all conditions in place to develop this popular sport along with water ski and windsurfing, kayak and canoe competitions, sailing regattas on the Caspian coast," said the president in the end of the exercise.

- Turkmen Officials Prevent Opening Of Art Exhibit

An art exhibit in Ashgabat for a well-known Turkmen artist has been canceled by Turkmen authorities without explanation, RFE/RL's Turkmen Service reports.

Culture Minister Gulmyrat Muradov nixed the plan to show works by Tokar Tugurov on May 28 in the hall of the Union of Artists of Turkmenistan, but gave no reason for the order.

The exhibit was planned last year by friends and relatives of the artist, who died in 2008 at the age of 64. It had previously been postponed several times by authorities. Berdimyrat Batyrov, a Turkmen intellectual who had gone to the museum to attend the event, told RFE/RL that those who gathered for the exhibit were shocked that authorities prevented it from opening. "The authorities tried to explain by saying there were lots of other events organized in the city," he said. But he said the authorities are "afraid of gatherings of intelligentsia in the [Ashgabat] city center."

Tugurov, who had been honored as Turkmenistan's top artist and was a member of the International Federation of Artists and the Union of Artists in Russia, has had his art exhibited in many countries, including Britain, Japan, Bangladesh, Russia, and Kazakhstan.

A memorial event was held in honor of Tugurov at the Museum of Fine Arts in Ashgabat on May 26. That event was attended by the artist's friends and colleagues, as well as by representatives from the U.S. Embassy.

Uzbekistan

Political Front

Geo strategic Front

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Economic /Energy Front

- China, Kazakh Pipeline Expansion On Hu Visit Agenda

Chinese President Hu Jintao will sign an agreement to increase crude pipeline capacity from Central Asia during a trip to Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan next week.

Chinese assistant foreign minister Cheng Guoping told reporters in Beijing that the agreement will be part of China's efforts to diversify oil sources.

The Sino-Kazakh line accounts for roughly 4 percent of China's total crude imports, which hit a record high of more than 5 million barrels per day in April. compiled from Reuters reports

- Uzbekistan receives new passenger locomotives from China

Two electric locomotives produced by CSR Zhuzhou Electric Locomotive Company (China) for Uzbekistan Railways were presented in Tashkent on 4 June.

In accordance with the agreement signed in 2008, the Chinese company was to supply 15 high-speed passenger locomotives during 2010-2011.

However, the sides had reached an agreement last year that all locomotives would be ready by the end of this year. The new trains are capable of moving at 160 kmh speed, which will reduce travel time for passengers and sharply decrease energy costs.

For instance, the travel time from Tashkent to Samarkand will be reduced by 30 mins from 3.5 hrs to 3 hrs, while energy consumption will fall by 15%.

Chief engineer of Zhuzhou Electric Locomotive Company Suo Jianguo said the supply of the locomotives was a result of economic cooperation and strengthening friendship ties between Uzbekistan and China.

Vice Prime Minister of Uzbekistan U.Rozukulov, mayor of Tashkent A.Tukhtayev, chairman of board of Uzbekistan Railways A.Ramatov and others participated in the trains presentation ceremony.

Uzbekistan is purchasing 15 locomotives from China within an investment project, aimed at renewal of the park of passenger locomotives of the country.

The project, which has a total cost of USD 75.53 million, is being financed by long-term soft credit of the Chinese government.

Social Front

- Armored Vehicles Withdrawn From Uzbek Exclave

BATKEN, Kyrgyzstan -- Uzbekistan began withdrawing armored vehicles from an Uzbek exclave on Kyrgyz territory today, RFE/RL's Kyrgyz Service reports.

The withdrawal was agreed during bilateral talks on June 1 aimed at easing tensions over the Sokh exclave near the two countries' border.

Uzbekistan deployed 37 armored vehicles near the Sokh village of Chechme in 1999 following an incursion by Uzbek militants in a nearby area. In line with the June 1 decision, 26 of the vehicles are being withdrawn today.

The Uzbek and Kyrgyz border officials also agreed that several checkpoints along the border, including those separating Sokh from Kyrgyz territory, will be eliminated. It was decided that the border will be enforced with barbed-wired fences instead.

On May 31, Kyrgyz citizens blocked the main highway connecting Sokh with Uzbekistan, demanding protection for Kyrgyz citizens crossing the exclave's territory. They said that since May 26, some 10 Kyrgyz cars have been attacked and damaged by residents of Khushiyar, a second Uzbek exclave in southern Kyrgyzstan. The Sokh exclave is populated mainly by Tajiks. Tensions there were raised after the local Kyrgyz authorities decided to stop allowing the residents of Sokh to use Kyrgyz pasture lands adjoining the exclave.

- Uzbekistan: The human rights activist Tatiana Dovlatova is being persecuted

The independent Tashkent-based human rights activist Tatiana Dovlatova, the participant of many demonstrations, the observer in the civil and criminal courts, the defender of

property owners' rights, was invited for interrogation with the district investigator. According to the invitation letter, she is incriminated "Hooliganism", the article of the Republic of Uzbekistan Criminal Code. In the opinion of investigators, she committed hooliganism with aggravated circumstances as a part of the group.

Tatiana Dovlatova

Vladimir Husainov, the colleague of Dovlatova, informed Ferghana.Ru that "on Monday Tatiana will see the investigator and, possibly, everything will be cleared out. So far they do not have documented facts, except for faked notices with unclear stamp, but not official seal. They threaten Tatiana, set up a watch after her and promised 5 years in jail". According to him, this is not the first interrogation: earlier Tatiana was interviewed as victim and suspect and, now, as defender.

It has to be mentioned that Dovlatova and Vladimir Husainov have been monitoring the currency exchange offices operations in the Kadysheva market. Tatiana Dovlatova said the administration of Khamza district department of internal affairs in Tashkent of being patron to currency criminals. In the beginning of 2010 Dovlatova was assaulted by currency dealers. At that day she was accompanied by some journalist Odyl Ergashev. He escaped immediately after the beginning of fight and the human rights defenders believe he could cooperate with National Security Service of Uzbekistan.

In the protocol Tatiana Dovlatova was indicated as the victim. However, later on the police said she was suspect, accusing her of beating four policemen and 10 currency dealers (!).

At the end of April the district police officers conducted unsanctioned search in the house of Tatiana Dovlatova. They wanted to force Tatiana follow them to the police office, but the emergency doctor prevented this process. The authorities continued to put pressure on her and now, obviously, Tatiana became the defender.

In this concern, on May 27 she addressed the open letter to Islam Karimov with the request to deprive her and her relatives of Uzbek citizenship:

"You took the responsibility before people and took oath before the Constitution of the Republic of Uzbekistan, promised to faithfully serve Uzbek people. However, despite the declared democratic principles, the republic is ruled by unpunished officials, violating laws. Each official feels he is the king and treats the citizens as boring visitors. The corruption can be observed in the judicial system and law enforcement bodies. The mafia structures joined up with state bodies while NSS either does nothing or ignores this fact, perhaps, because it is also involved in the game. The situation is getting worse in the period your of presidency.

It is a common knowledge that the disorder is observed in all the currency exchange offices while interior ministry provides patronage to banking industry. Whoever gets involved must be suppressed. What the law enforcement bodies do their people is shame. Uzbekistan's image is deteriorating because of corrupted officials, looking for personal benefits. There is no room for my family and myself in the despotism of state power. Therefore, I beg you, the president of the Republic of Uzbekistan, to deprive me and my family of Uzbek citizenship".

The independent experts believe this letter will not have impact, but will produce the wave of repressions against Tatiana Dovlatova because law enforcement bodies and their crime partners are afraid to be disclosed.

