

KURMANBEK BAKIEV AS ASKAR AKAEV'S POLITICAL SUCCESSOR: FAILURE TO CONSOLIDATE THE POLITICAL REGIME IN KYRGYZSTAN

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Introduction

The consolidation of political regimes is a popular topic of discussion among experts in various theories of political transformation. Such debates focus on defining the point at which a particular transformation process has come to complete fruition or at least reached a temporary halt. The “minimalistic” definition of consolidation offered by J. Linz can be used to determine this transition point. Linz believes that democratic consolidation occurs when there are no significant actors to act as a veto group with respect to democratic institutions.¹ If we disengage ourselves from the teleological understanding of transformation as a transition exclusively toward democracy, the concept of consolidation can be formulated as follows: a political regime

can be considered consolidated (stable for a relatively long time) in which there are no significant actors capable of changing the regime as a whole without the consent of other significant actors.² Note that since we are not talking about democratic consolidation here, but about the consolidation of a political regime, this definition is universal and applies equally to all cases of transition. In addition to “fighting by the rules” (consolidated democracy), other scenarios of consolidation can fall under such concepts as “a community of elites” and “the winner takes all.”³

The consolidation of political regimes in the post-Soviet expanse has been a little-studied topic so far. Several factors make it difficult to re-

¹ See: J. Linz, A. Stepan, *Problems of Democratic Transition and Consolidation: Southern Europe, South America, and Post-Communist Europe*, Baltimore, London, 1996, p. 156.

² See: V. Helman, “Transformatsii i rezhimy: neopredelennost i eyo posledstviia,” in: *Rossiiia regionov: transformatsiia politicheskikh rezhimov*, ed. by V. Helman, S. Ryzhenkov, M. Bri, Moscow, 2000, p. 34.

³ *Ibidem*.

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search this phenomenon. First, political transformation has not resulted in democratic consolidation in any of the CIS states. Second, the unresolved conflicts and absence of a common citizen identity in several of the states have also caused significant difficulties in authoritarian consolidation, which has led to the formation of hybrid regimes and, in some cases, to the collapse of non-consolidated semi-authoritarian forms of rule, as the political processes of the 2000s in Georgia, Ukraine, Kyrgyzstan, and Moldova have shown. In these countries, a so-called transition within the transition has occurred, which also makes it difficult to study the results of the transformation.

A closer analysis, however, shows a common logic in the transformation processes in each of the countries mentioned within the framework of the political tradition that exists in them. This article will take a look at the political process in Kyrgyzstan, after the forced change in the political elite in March 2005, from the viewpoint of the

ruling elite's attempts to consolidate it. The analysis will focus on President Kurmanbek Bakiev's strategies using official and unofficial institutions to consolidate the political regime. As Samuel Huntington noted, "men [in transition societies] may, of course, have order without liberty, but they cannot have liberty without order,"⁴ justifiably emphasizing the need for consolidation of the regime (not necessarily democratic) as the main factor and condition of democratization.

This article was written before the news came from Bishkek that a new state coup had occurred. This gives rise to another question: why did the president's measures aimed, as it seemed, toward consolidation of the regime end in another collapse of the political institutions? Let us take a look at the president's actions in 2005-2009 through the prism of this problem.

⁴ S.P. Huntington, *Political Order in Changing Societies*, Yale University Press, 1968, pp. 7-8.

Stages of Transformation of the Political Regime in 2005-2009

Throughout history, the Kyrgyz have never experienced a despotic state system. When the members of certain clans tried to establish such a system in the nomadic society, they inevitably came up against resistance, since the nomads regarded this as an unjustified attempt to usurp power. So, due to its nomadic roots, Kyrgyz society has always been a much more egalitarian society than, for instance, the non-nomadic Uzbek society. All of this, along with the incomplete nation-building process and socioeconomic delimitations, defined the course of post-Soviet transformation of the political regime in Kyrgyzstan, which significantly differs from the transition scenarios in other Central Asian republics.⁵

The political regime of Kyrgyzstan during Askar Akaev's third presidential term can be described as fragmented (clannish) authoritarianism. Ethnopolitical splits and clan contradictions prevented consolidation of the authoritarian regime. Transformation of the political regime in 2005-2009 went through several stages.

- The first stage saw the collapse of the former political regime and the onset of a period of ambiguity (March-May 2005), during which the main presidential candidates were designat-

⁵ A detailed analysis of the transformation of the political regime in Kyrgyzstan from the end of the 1980s to 2005 is not an objective of the present article (for more on that topic, see: N. Borisov, *Mezhdru sovremennostiu i traditsiey: politicheskie alternativy postsovetsskoi Tsentral'noi Azii*, Moscow, 2010).

ed—Kurmanbek Bakiev and Felix Kulov. But in May 2005, Felix Kulov decided not to run independently for president, opting to support Kurmanbek Bakiev's candidacy instead.

- The second stage was marked by a pact within the ruling elite between Kurmanbek Bakiev and Felix Kulov (May 2005-December 2006). The Bakiev-Kulov alliance predetermined the outcome of the 2005 presidential election, which led to the formation of a government headed by Felix Kulov. So the period of ambiguity came to an end in keeping with the "community of elites" scenario, which was potentially promoted by the establishment of political polycentrism. At this stage, the ruling coalition, which was composed of the main actors in the March "revolution," gradually disintegrated and the opposition became more active, organizing mass public rallies in the center of the capital demanding reform of the Constitution, followed by resignation of the president and prime minister. The conflict ended in the sides drawing up a coordinated draft of a new version of the Constitution. In December 2006, the president disbanded Kulov's government, which made it possible to form a political regime with one dominating actor.
- The third stage consisted of establishing and consolidating the political regime with one dominating actor (since January 2007). At this stage, President Kurmanbek Bakiev confidently and consistently built up his resources. In February 2007, Felix Kulov declared himself the main leader of the new opposition, and some of the heads of the former opposition movement For Reforms! announced the creation of a United Front, which began holding public rallies demanding the president's resignation.⁶ In April 2007, the president formed a new government headed by Almaz Atambaev, one of the opposition leaders, and used force to stop the opposition's demonstrations. Further events showed that the opposition did not have enough resources to mobilize citizens, which put the president back in the saddle. Kurmanbek Bakiev took three important successive steps to reinforce his power: he called for a referendum on the new Constitution and Election Code (October 2007), early elections to the parliament (Jogorku Kenesh) according to party lists (December 2007), and a presidential election (July 2009). Let us take a closer look at these steps.

Adoption of a New Version of the Constitution

The need for amending the Constitution was voiced immediately after the change in power in March 2005. During the "revolution," and immediately after it, the topic of constitutional reform in Kyrgyzstan was extremely urgent. The political elite that came to power on the wave of discontent with Askar Akaev announced that constitutional amendment was the main way to prevent the return of an authoritative regime and the personal rule when the president has too much power in his hands. But this reform never seemed to get underway, which stands to reason in light of Kurmanbek Bakiev's return from oppositionist to acting president and, later, after his convincing victory at the election, to incumbent president. By the beginning of the fall 2005, the parliamentary factions, as well as the Constitution Assembly, in which representatives of the leading political and public organizations participated, had drawn up more than 15 drafts of the Fundamental Law. But it was not until June

⁶ See: F. Kulov, "Zaiavlenie Feliksa Kulova: 'Ja ne budu prisluzhivat otdelnym litsam ili politicheskim gruppirovkam,'" 24kg Information Agency, 14 February, 2007, available at [<http://www.24.kg/community/14410-2007/02/14/41581.html>].

2006 that it was announced that President Bakiev had been presented with three different versions of constitutional reform that set forth different combinations of powers of the executive and legislative branches.⁷ These versions essentially envisaged a transfer to a parliamentary, presidential, and semi-presidential republic, respectively. In the fall of 2006, they were rejected by both the commission of experts and the president. “Bakiev’s entourage,” notes Felix Kulov, “suddenly began talking about how the best alternative was the American version of a presidential republic that has a president and vice president and no prime minister. The main argument was that exclusive concentration of power in the president’s hands was just what the present situation needed, then once the country was back on track and stability had been established, democratic leniencies could be introduced.”⁸ First, this statement showed a change in the president’s position regarding the direction of constitutional reform (intensifying presidential power instead of weakening it) and, second, it demonstrated that the ruling elite did not have any strategic plan of constitutional reform and all the proposals put forward were ad hoc.

In November 2006, the For Reforms! movement held a public rally where it voiced its main criticism of the president—he was blamed for holding back the constitutional reform. The leading elite was faced with the serious threat of new mass demonstrations, particularly since Bakiev’s position in the context of his not entirely legitimate rise to power was extremely vulnerable. So, faced with either losing his power completely or having it reduced, the president chose the latter in exchange for a halt to the demonstrations. As early as 8 November, 2006, Kurmanbek Bakiev signed a new draft of the Constitution and submitted it to parliament for perusal. The very same day, the parliament adopted the Constitution with no further ado in the second reading, whereby the reading and voting took a total of about two or three minutes.⁹ This version of the Constitution envisaged that no less than half of the Jogorku Kenesh members would be elected by party lists, the prime minister would be appointed by the party that won the elections, and parliament would have the right to make a vote of no confidence not only with respect to the government as a whole, but also with respect to its individual members.¹⁰ This unofficial pact put a lid on the opposition’s passions.

But there was a constitutional conflict: the sitting parliament at that time had been elected by single-mandate constituencies and did not have any party coalitions. Correspondingly, the president was unable to form a new government with that particular parliament. In order to overcome this conflict, an attempt was made to disband the parliament by “working” with the deputies loyal to the president. Unofficial bargaining began with the parliament once more over redistribution of the constitutional powers of the supreme power bodies. Faced with the threat of disbandment of the parliament, the deputies agreed to accept the new version of the Constitution presented by the president in December 2006. This version again augmented the president’s powers.¹¹ So just two months later, the president again made use of unofficial bargaining to restore his lost powers.

But Akaev’s parliament still presented a thorn in the president’s side, preventing him from completely removing the contradictions and further monopolizing his power. In order to disband this parliament, the president would have to change the Constitution again, this time with the help of the Constitutional Court.

⁷ See: V. Panfilova, “Vybirat pridetsia presidentu Bakievu: v Kirgizii razrabotany tri predvaritelnykh proekta novoi Konstitutsii respubliky,” *Nezavisimaya gazeta*, 22 June, 2006.

⁸ F. Kulov, *Na perevale*, Moscow, 2008, p. 223.

⁹ See: *Ibid.*, p. 225.

¹⁰ See: Zakon Kyrgyzskoi Respubliki “O novoi redaktsii Konstitutsii Kyrgyzskoi Respubliki” ot 9 noiabria 2006 goda No. 180 (Law of the Kyrgyz Republic on the New Version of the Constitution of the Kyrgyz Republic of 9 November, 2006, No. 180), available at [http://www.president.kg/docs/const_2006rv].

¹¹ See: Zakon Kyrgyzskoi Respubliki “O novoi redaktsii Konstitutsii Kyrgyzskoi Respubliki” ot 15 ianvaria 2007 goda No. 2 (Law of the Kyrgyz Republic on the New Version of the Constitution of the Kyrgyz Republic of 15 January, 2007, No. 2), available at [http://www.president.kg/docs/const_2006rv].

On 14 September, 2007, after examining the statements by opposition deputies of the Jogorku Kenesh, K. Karabekov and M. Eshimkanov, on violation of the regulations for making amendments to the Constitution and on the Jogorku Kenesh exceeding its authorities (the amendments were adopted without a decision of the Constitutional Court), the Constitutional Court of Kyrgyzstan annulled both of the latest versions of the Constitution (November 2006 and January 2007). So, Akaev's Constitution of 2003 came into force again. It is worth noting that the Constitutional Court justified the unconstitutional nature of the amendment-making procedure with references to the inoperative Constitution of 1993 in the 2003 version.¹² What is more, although the initiative to recognize the amendments as unconstitutional came from the opposition leaders, their victory in the Constitutional Court also signified the president's victory, since it presented the opportunity to hold a referendum on the new Constitution, the draft of which had evidently been drawn up long ago. The Constitutional Court issued its decision on 14 September, and the presidential decree on a referendum on the new Constitution was publicized on 19 September, whereby the referendum was scheduled for 21 October, 2007. So citizens only had a little over a month, between the decision of the Constitutional Court and voting at the referendum, to become acquainted with the drafts of the Constitution and the Election Code (and they were published in Kyrgyz, we will note). We will also note that the deputies who were so eager to cancel the amendments joined the president's team a few days after the referendum. M. Eshimkanov was appointed acting general director of the National Television and Radio Broadcasting Corporation of the Kyrgyz Republic and K. Karabekov joined the Ak zhol party, of which Kurmanbek Bakiev became the chairman.¹³

The results of the referendum showed that the president's draft won hands down; 76% of the electorate voted for the new version of the Constitution.¹⁴

In accordance with the new version of the Constitution, the president restored his right to form the government as advised by the prime minister and his right to disband the parliament in response to a parliamentary vote of no confidence in the government. A second vote of no confidence requires mandatory adoption of a decision either on the government's resignation, or on disbandment of the parliament.¹⁵ So, the new Constitution had a much stronger presidential component than the amendments of 2005-2007. In so doing, Kurmanbek Bakiev restored almost all the most essential presidential powers: the right to disband the parliament in response to a vote of no confidence in the government, the right not to agree to the parliament's decision on a vote of no confidence, and the right to disband the government at his own discretion without participation of the parliament.

In fact, there are only a few differences between the new version of the Constitution and Akaev's Constitution of 2003 with respect to the relations among the president, parliament, and government:

1. The prime minister is not nominated by the president, but by deputies of the political party that receives more than 50% of the deputy mandates of the Jogorku Kenesh (Art 69); however the president makes the appointment.
2. The prime minister nominates candidates for members of government, while they are appointed by the president (Art 69).

¹² See: Decision of the Constitutional Court of the Kyrgyz Republic of 14 September, 2007, Fergana.Ru Information Agency, available at [<http://www.ferghana.ru/news.php?id=7089>].

¹³ See: TsentriAzia.Ru Information Agency, available at [<http://centrasia.ru>].

¹⁴ See: Information on the results of the referendum on adopting the Law of the Kyrgyz Republic on the New Version of the Constitution of the Kyrgyz Republic, Central Commission of the Kyrgyz Republic on Holding Elections and Referendums, available at [<http://www.shailoo.gov.kg/referendum/itogi-referenduma>].

¹⁵ See: Konstitutsiia Kyrgyzskoi Respubliki: priniata referendumom Kyrgyzskoi Respubliki 21 oktjabria 2007 goda (Constitution of the Kyrgyz Republic: adopted by a referendum of the Kyrgyz Republic on 21 October, 2007), Bishkek, 2009.

3. It is clear from Art 69 that the government lays down its powers before the newly elected parliament and not before the newly elected president.
4. The Jogorku Kenesh is elected according to party lists (Art 54).

Art 71 notes that the government is responsible to the president and Jogorku Kenesh, but the government's responsibility to the parliament is limited to the strict rules for proposing a vote of no confidence: it can only be proposed after the prime minister's annual report has been reviewed and, as a counter move, may result in the disbandment of the parliament itself (Art 71). Guaranteed resignation of an individual member of government requires that the parliament bring a motion of no confidence against him twice within six months.

If Akaev's and the current Constitution are compared according to André Krouwel's scale (with adjustments by Oleg Zaznaev), we get an index of the form of government that can be understood as the difference between the presidential and parliamentary indexes, +6 for the Constitution of 2003 and +4 for the current one. So there has been a certain redistribution of powers in favor of the parliament, although the form of government in Kyrgyzstan on the whole can still be described as a presidentialized semi-presidential system.¹⁶ It is obvious that there has been no significant redistribution of powers, while constitutional reform, which was declared as one of the main objectives of the counter elite when it came to power after Askar Akaev's resignation, boiled down to making minor amendments to the Constitution. This is how Kurmanbek Bakiev restored his lost constitutional powers.

The creation of an *administrative party* and simultaneous *reform of the election code*, primarily a change in the electoral formula first to mixed (according to the Constitution of 2006), and then to proportional (according to the new edition of 2007), was another step toward strengthening presidential power. The referendum on the new Election Code was held at the same time as the referendum on the Constitution, which also promoted its approval.

The administrative party, which became the main one in parliament after the election, was created rapidly. Its main resource was the president's support. As early as two days (!) after the president's decision to call a referendum on the new edition of the Constitution, on 22 September, 2007, a meeting of an initiative group to create the For the Constitution, Reforms, and Development! Movement uniting more than 10 political parties was held with President Kurmanbek Bakiev in attendance. A declaration was adopted at the meeting announcing that the movement's members had joined to "support the president in his intention to bring the constitutional reform in Kyrgyzstan to a dignified conclusion and hold a referendum at which a draft of the amendments to the Constitution of the Kyrgyz Republic and new Election Code will be presented."¹⁷ On 15 October, 2007, participants in the national forum of the For the Constitutions, Reforms, and Development! Movement came forward with an initiative to create a political party based on the movement. The founding congress was held the same day, which publicized its decision to create a political party called the Ak zhol People's Party and adopted the party's program and charter. Kurmanbek Bakiev was elected as the chairman of the party's executive committee. On 10 November, 2007, the party congress decided that the party would take part in the early elections of deputies to the Jogorku Kenesh and approved the list of deputy candidates.

Askar Akaev had also tried to create an administrative party, but was unsuccessful since he was unable to ensure its majority in parliament. Institutional factors contributed to the failure of

¹⁶ For more detail on the index of form of government and concepts of "presidentialized," "parliamentarianized" and "absolutely balanced" semi-presidential republic, see: O. Zanaev, *Poluprezidentskaia sistema: teoreticheskie i prikladnye aspekty*, Kazan, 2006, pp. 171-202.

¹⁷ *Otchet o rabote Narodnoi partii "Ak zhol" za period sozdaniia partii* (Ak zhol People's Party Work Report During Creation of the Party), available at [http://akjolnarod.kg/newcms/images/4syezdzd/otchet_rus.doc].

this attempt. So reform of the election code initiated by President Kurmanbek Bakiev should be viewed in the context of creating an administrative party that was to have the absolute majority in parliament.

The key change in the election code was the transition to forming the parliament exclusively according to party lists. This step solved several very important tasks straight away.

- First, the local administration heads were no longer in control of the election process, as they had been in the single-mandate system. It is much easier to control political parties as the only entities of the election process from a consolidated Center than the election of 90 single-mandate deputies from among more than 400 candidates. This also makes it easier to ensure the administrative party's majority in parliament.
- Second, the transition to proportionality helps to alleviate any clan-regional conflicts translated to the political field during elections according to single-mandate constituencies, something that proved to be a constant bane in the 1990s. For example, during the election campaign of 1995, the Saruu urussu Society was established in the Naryn Region, one of the main objectives of which was ensuring that the candidates from the saruu tribe won the election.¹⁸ On the whole, not one candidate for deputy in the Jogorku Kenesh from the north of the republic even attempted to be elected in the south and vice versa. Such conflicts also emerged during direct election of the heads of the *ayyl akmotu* (rural administrations), which was canceled by the new Election Code. Thus the amendments exhausted the grounds for such conflicts by prohibiting any associations between candidates and territory. The reform also aimed to reduce the importance of a candidate's regional self-identification in favor of his political significance, which has never played a pertinent role in Kyrgyzstan throughout the years of its independence.
- Third, the reform largely removes the possibility of using the financial and administrative resource in the regions, since the resource is distributed only from the Center. In the 1990s, sociologists revealed that only the candidates with an annual income of no less than \$12,000 (the per capita annual income being \$400-600) could acquire seats in parliament.¹⁹ Now access to parliament depends not so much on the candidates' financial status as on their access to the administrative resource and the possibility of being included on the party list.

Another extremely important factor preventing the appearance of regional political forces is the regulation that a party should not only surmount the 5% barrier in order to participate in the distribution of deputy mandates, but also receive 0.5% or more of the votes of the electorate included on the voter lists²⁰ for each region and for the cities of Bishkek and Osh (Art 77 of Election Code of the Kyrgyz Republic). In the 1990s, almost all the political forces in the republic were created from the clientele of the leading politicians, around whom active fellow countrymen and relatives rallied. The new regulation prevents parties from being formed on the regional or family-tribal principle from candidates who are fellow countrymen.

Finally, a party's electoral list had to have no more than 70% of representatives of one gender, no less than 15% of people under 35, and no less than 15% of citizens of different nationalities (Art 72 of the Code).

¹⁸ See: E. Mamytova, "The Problems of Forming a Political Opposition in Kyrgyzstan," *Central Asia and the Caucasus*, No. 4, 2000, p. 54.

¹⁹ See: Z. Sydykova, *Za kulisami demokratii po-kyrgyzski*, Bishkek, 1997, p. 3.

²⁰ Note that, in this case, the percentage is calculated not on the basis of the number of voters participating in the voting, but of the total number of voters included on the lists.

It should be noted that almost all the indicated innovations in the election code played successfully into the hands of the administrative party, Ak zhol, at the parliamentary elections of 2007. According to the election results, the Ak zhol party's candidates received 47.9% of the votes and 71 seats out of the total of 90 in the parliament (almost 79% of the seats). The united opposition party, Ata-Meken, which gathered 9.28% of the votes, was unable to surmount the regional barrier in Osh and the Osh Region. The opposition was represented only by the Social Democratic (11 seats) and Communist (8 seats) parties in parliament.²¹ So the new election code prevented the opposition party from getting into parliament, even although it received a large number of votes, while the president's party was ensured the absolute majority. This is a clear violation of the principle of justice: the party that in fact represents the interests of the majority of voters did not receive one mandate in parliament.

Moreover, regional parties and parties of fellow countrymen essentially ceased to exist. The deputies elected from Ak zhol included 48% of representatives from the southern regions, while the factions of the Social Democratic Party and Communist Party had 22% and 25% of southerners, respectively.²² This data does not allow us to describe the parties as regional-clannish.

Introducing quotas on the representation of woman, young people, and non-titular nationalities yielded certain results, although their representation in parliament still does not reflect the real correlation in society.²³

So reform of the election code has weakened the institution of regional governors and created conditions for ensuring the administrative party's majority in parliament and removing other political forces from the political process.

The Presidential Election

In compliance with the Constitutional Court's decision, the presidential election was to be held no later than 25 October, 2009 instead of 2010. Parliament, where the Ak zhol party held the majority, scheduled it to be held on 23 July, 2009, which without a doubt strengthened the position of the incumbent president and weakened that of his rivals.²⁴ As we know, the summer is traditionally a time of political inactivity when most people take their vacations. Moreover, the election was scheduled on a work day, which made it possible for all budget employees to vote early on absentee ballots, which was not monitored by observers.²⁵ Moreover, the early election along with its reduced campaigning time gave the opposition very little opportunity to mobilize its supporters and promote itself. It was unable to put forward a single candidate.

The presidential election ended in Kurmanbek Bakiev's landslide victory: he received 76.43% of the votes, while his main rival, Almaz Atambaev (who previously occupied the post of prime minister), received 8.39% with a voter turnout of 79.13%.²⁶ This high result for the incumbent presi-

²¹ "Sostav deputatov Jogorku Kenesha Kyrgyzskoi Respubliki chetvertogo sozyva," Central Commission of the Kyrgyz Republic for Elections and Referendums, available at [<http://www.shailoo.gov.kg/vybory-deputatov-zhk-kr-2007-po-partijnym-spiskam/162>].

²² See: *Ibidem*.

²³ When forming party lists, a combination of quotas is often used, when the same candidates represent both women and people under 35, or young people and representatives of the non-titular nationalities.

²⁴ See: "Kyrgyzstan: Komitet parlamenta khochet naznachit vybory prezidenta na 23 iulia 2009 goda," Fergana.Ru Information Agency, 19 March, 2009, available at [<http://www.ferghana.ru/news.php?id=11523>].

²⁵ See: "Molodiozhnoe dvizhenie "Ja ne veriu" i posle vyborov prezidenta Kyrgyzstana prodolzhaet priderzhivatsia svoey pozitsii," 24kg Information Agency, 24 July, 2009, available at [<http://www.24.kg/election2009/53581-2009/07/24/116645.html>].

²⁶ See: "Rezultaty vyborov Prezidenta Kyrgyzskoi Respubliki 23 iulia 2009 goda," Central Commission of the Kyrgyz Republic on Elections and Referendums, available at [<http://www.shailoo.gov.kg/ru/news/2171/#more-2171>].

dent makes it impossible to call the election fair and at the same time indicates consolidation of the political regime. Kurmanbek Bakiev's result also shows the absence of an electoral north-south split, although the Central Election Commission never did publicize the election results for the country's regions.

Reform of the Executive Power Bodies

The radical reform of the central executive power bodies of the Kyrgyz Republic Kurmanbek Bakiev carried out in October-November 2009 was a direct result of his landslide victory of 75% of the votes.

The president gave a brief description of the objectives and gist of the reform at the Republic Assembly held on 20 October, 2009. Reform of the administration system, noted Kurmanbek Bakiev, "should give us an efficient, mobile, and civil service designed on the basis of a systemic, and not an administrative-bureaucratic approach."²⁷ The reform applied to both the presidential administration structures and to the government bodies.

In keeping with the president's decision, the Presidential Administration was abolished and replaced with the institution of president consisting of the President's Apparatus, President's Secretariat, Central Agency for Development, Investments, and Innovations, State Advisor on Defense, Security, and Law and Order, and State Minister of Foreign Affairs.²⁸

The President's Apparatus was to be responsible for organizational and administrative support of the head of state, while the Secretariat was to provide the president with information-analytical and expert support. An important step was the establishment of the Central Agency of the Kyrgyz Republic for Development, Investments, and Innovations (CADII) in the structure of the institution of president. Its objectives included forming strategies for restructuring the economy, supporting business and entrepreneurship, and attracting investments. The Agency was also to carry out overall coordination and preparation of the development budget and draw up national economic programs, national infrastructural projects, investment programs, and proposals for improving the business environment.²⁹ It becomes clear even from this brief list of the functions of the newly created agency that it has extensive powers in the financial and economic sphere. The CADII essentially became the main structure responsible for the country's economic development. The Agency was headed by the president's son, Maxim Bakiev. The new structure was fully independent both of the government and of the parliament, since it was controlled exclusively by the president.³⁰

The institution of president also included State Advisor to the President of the Kyrgyz Republic, who was responsible for ensuring coordination of the defense and security ministries and preparing recommendations on defense, security, and law and order issues, and the State Minister of Foreign Affairs, who was no longer part of the government.

²⁷ *Statement of the President of the Kyrgyz Republic Kurmanbek Bakiev at the Republic Assembly on Reform of State Administration*, available at [<http://president.kg/ru/press/statements/4506>].

²⁸ See: *Decree of the President of the Kyrgyz Republic of 26 October, 2009, No. 425 On Measures to Implement the Law of the Kyrgyz Republic on the Structure of the Kyrgyz Republic Government*, available at [<http://president.kg/ru/press/ukaz/4653>].

²⁹ See: *Ibidem*.

³⁰ See: N. Rakymbai uulu, "Tsentralnoe agentstvo po razvitiu, investitsiiam i innovatsiiam: fabrika natsproektov i ili protopravatelstvo?" PR.kg Information-Analytical Portal, available at [<http://www.pr.kg/gazeta/number454/949>].

An analysis of this reform leads to the conclusion that a second government was essentially created under the president that could be compared to the Cabinet of Ministers in terms of powers and budget. This “government” had its own defense and security, foreign policy, and economic blocks.

The reform also pulled the carpet from under the prime minister both in terms of political clout and resource potential since he was deprived of his control over the most important institutions, as well as his essential powers. Head of the Presidential Administration D. Usenov was appointed head of the new government, which only confirmed that the new Cabinet had no subjectness. The government also became more compact: it consisted of 14 ministries, 7 agencies, 6 services, and 2 funds.

As for the other political actors, they were consistently removed from the political process. It is worth noting that many representatives of the former opposition were given posts in the government during these years or became parliamentary deputies of the Ak zhol presidential party. For instance, Felix Kulov headed the Board of Directors of the project for developing small and medium energy enterprises, Almaz Atambaev occupied the post of prime minister, and Zainidin Kurmanov joined the presidential party.

So by skillfully combining coercive and compromise strategies and using both official and unofficial institutions, the president attempted to carry out authoritarian consolidation of the political regime similar to Askar Akaev’s previous attempt. Kurmanbek Bakiev can be considered Askar Akaev’s political successor, since the latter made repeated attempts to remove the opposition and create a majority party and obedient parliament, while his relatives influenced the political process. Kurmanbek Bakiev not only continued all of these initiatives, but also formalized the informal institutions that functioned under Askar Akaev.

The parallel government that also existed *de facto* under Askar Akaev acquired the official status of institution of president with all the necessary powers. The parliament was under the control of the president, but this control was no longer based on bargaining with single-mandate deputies, but on a dominating political party. A vertical was also established in the relations between the center and the regions: the president acquired the right not only to appoint the regional heads, but also the deputy governors, while the governors could appoint deputy regional heads, which used to be one of the prime minister’s powers.³¹ In so doing, elections of rural administration heads were abolished. The president’s son and his brother were influencing politics not through informal ties, as under Askar Akaev, but occupied high state posts and controlled large state budget funds. In other words, the political process in Kyrgyzstan was developing within the framework of political tradition and complete continuity of the political institutions, so the events of March 2005 can in no way be called a revolution.

Conclusion

The political regime in Kyrgyzstan in 2005-2009 evolved from the unstable clan authoritarianism with weak state institutions characteristic of Askar Akaev’s rule through its collapse and brief period of ambiguity to the mono-centric regime of Kurmanbek Bakiev’s personal power. But as Askar Akaev’s political successor, Kurmanbek Bakiev was not prepared for the monopolization of power leading to a new social explosion that ended in 2005 with the collapse of Akaev’s regime.

³¹ See: “Jogorku Kenesh prinal zakon, po kotoromu Prezident Kyrgyzskoi Respubliki budet naznachat zamestiteley gubernatorov,” 18 December, 2009, available at [http://akjolnarod.kg/newcms/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=558&Itemid=1].

Instead of strengthening the political institutions and statehood as he promised, President Bakiev focused mainly on building up his personal power. As Samuel Huntington justifiably points out, "The official who attempts to maximize power or other values in the short run often weakens his institution in the long run."³² In other words, there was no rationalization of political institutions, that is, their separation from the personality of the leader, which could become a factor of stability of a political regime.

As a result of the institutional transformations of 2005-2009, the president gained personal control over all the main political institutions. The constitutional reform did not lead to a redistribution of power between the president and the parliament, the parliament itself was monopolized by the president's administrative party, while the election system was formed in a way that ensured the absolute majority of this party. The creation of a parallel government headed by Maxim Bakiev, the holding of an uncompetitive presidential election, and the elimination of opposition actors from the political process completed the consolidation of Kurmanbek Bakiev's personal power, which he apparently erroneously perceived as consolidation of the political regime and stabilization of the political situation in the republic.

There can be no doubt that the transition to the proportional election system was to have been a significant step toward a contemporary political system that would remove Kyrgyzstan from clannish-regional politics. But since this system was used to ensure the monopoly of one political party in parliament in the context of real political and ethnoregional pluralism, it only aggravated the latent political conflict, demonstrating its lack of justice.

Another factor that helped to strengthen Bakiev's personal power and simultaneously weaken his regime was the "successor" scenario (in which his son was to be the successor). As we know, failure of this scenario under Askar Akaev was one of the reasons for the coup of 2005. It is obvious that monopolization of power also means monopolization of responsibility. The structure built by Kurmanbek Bakiev proved to be extremely vulnerable precisely because all the political institutions (parties, parliament, government, elections, and governors) were totally deprived of their subjectness. As a result, when the program of economic modernization and rise in the standard of living promised by the president turned into a three-fold hike in utility fees, the population put the blame exclusively on the president, his son, and his closest entourage. Since all the legal institutions of unsanctioned political participation were blocked by the ruling elite, there was another unconstitutional seizure of power by means of a coup. The collapse of the institution of president in such a political regime automatically meant the collapse of the entire power system too. The coup of 2010 demonstrated once more that ignoring the insurmountable polycentrism of Kyrgyz society is having extremely serious consequences for the country, while strengthening of the personal power regime is preventing strengthening of the political institutions, which made them unable to satisfy the growing political activity of the citizens. Developing the idea of Kurmanbek Bakiev as Askar Akaev's political successor, the conclusion can be drawn that Kurmanbek Bakiev went even further than his predecessor to reinforce his personal power, which led to more serious results for the country.

So the second attempt at authoritarian consolidation of the political regime in Kyrgyzstan has ended in failure. The new political elite of Kyrgyzstan, which, incidentally, includes politicians who have already occupied high state posts, is left with the super task of supporting the institutionalization of political polycentrism, that is, creating political institutions that will legally enforce the existence of several centers of power and make it possible for citizens to legally participate in politics. It is obvious that such institutions should be based on a consensus of the

³² S.P. Huntington, *op. cit.*, pp. 25-26.

political elites and not on the domination of one political actor, which contradicts Kyrgyzstan's political traditions and, as practice has shown, ends in a forced change of power fraught with serious consequences for the country.