

RADIO FREE EUROPE/RADIO LIBERTY

**CORRUPTION, REPRESSION, EXTREMISM IN CENTRAL ASIA:
LOOKING BEYOND KYRGYZSTAN**

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JEFFREY GEDMIN: Well, good afternoon and welcome to everybody. And apologies for my being late. Traffic was bad. You were in place and we want to be respectful of your time. My name is Jeff Gedmin. I'm president of Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty. And I think – I looked at the list this morning. We have considerable expertise in the audience and terrific expertise on this panel today.

I want to start at the top by thanking Chairman Berman and his committee for their interest and engagement in this region. I want to thank someone who wanted to be here but cannot be here – and that is a photojournalist from Uzbekistan, Umida Ahmedova, whose work is seen here to the left and maybe somewhere else out in the hallway. I'm looking around getting oriented myself.

But a photojournalist who wanted to be here, but was not granted a visa and is subject to, I'm given to understand, a great deal of political harassment and intimidation. I'm told, if I have it right, Diane, that even these photos were considered politically provocative and maligning of the Uzbek nation. I think they're beautiful. They're rich and they're interesting and they're tasteful. But sensitivities in some of the countries we're going to discuss today are quite different.

I was in Uzbekistan a year-and-a-half ago to talk about what we do; Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty today broadcasts in 20 countries from Russia to the Middle East. And part of our broadcast region is Central Asia, the five states in Central Asia. And I sat with a minister from the – an official from the foreign ministry in Tashkent who accused us, Radio Liberty, of – as he put it – “dumping dirt on the nation.” That was a quotation.

And I explained to him as best we could that we're in the free media business and we try to report accurately and truthfully; that we are interested in engagement and we would like to know if we're making mistakes how he sees them and how we can correct them. And it wasn't a very constructive conversation. It was an attempt but it was not a very constructive conversation.

So we're getting into the subject very quickly. Before we jump into the panel and the content and the discussion and hear from you, the audience, Jennifer Leonard is a great partner of ours through the International Crisis Group and, Jen, you would say a word of welcome, please?

JENNIFER LEONARD: No, I just wanted to echo your sentiment. Thank you for joining us, to our patient audience. We're pleased to have teamed with Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty to pull off this event as well as have our colleague, Paul Quinn-Judge, here from our field office in Bishkek.

International Crisis Group is a – we're in the business of conflict prevention and resolution. And so when it comes to media freedoms, we have a lot of overlapping interests, of course, with RFE. And so we're pleased to be here to sort of flesh out some of the issues, talk about the challenges facing Kyrgyzstan.

The Crisis Group tends to take a prescriptive approach to the situation. And we can delve into that. And, without further ado, I turn it over to the experts. Thank you.

MR. GEDMIN: Jen, thank you. And, again, thanks to the International Crisis Group. We have a terrific panel and a limited amount of time and we want to get you into the conversation, too.

Let me introduce first, if I may, Paul Quinn-Judge. Paul, would you lead off for us today? Paul Quinn-Judge is based in the region and has been based in Kyrgyzstan. He is a – I think many of you know him. He is a former writer for *The Guardian*, a former bureau chief for *Time* magazine in Moscow. He is a very thoughtful, very serious, very interesting analyst who has had a particular devotion to this region and the peoples in this region for some years. He is a great partner for Radio Free Europe and someone that many of our writers and broadcasters and journalists rely on. And he is fresh from the scene.

And, Paul, I think, if you agree, we've invited you to speak a little bit about Kyrgyzstan and the region, to talk a little bit about authoritarianism and the kind of governance and what one confronts. And I think for all of the panelists in the discussion today, we're asking the question, if we take on board what has happened, what is happening in Kyrgyzstan, does it tell us anything? Does it tell us anything about trends towards stability or trends towards democratization or trends toward a rise of Islamic extremism? So, Paul, thank you.

PAUL QUINN-JUDGE: Thank you. I'm – having just come from Bishkek, I don't know the word – think the word "fresh" applies to me. But I'll see if I can stay awake for the next couple of hours.

Before I start, I want to deviate slightly from the conversation and note that during the events in Kyrgyzstan recently Radio Liberty's Kyrgyz language service and the Russian section of the Kyrgyz language service – I'm talking about Radio Azattyk – played an exceedingly important role. And that role was virtually unique for a couple of days. They provided a remarkable degree of reliable information, which is something that continues to be in very short supply in Kyrgyzstan and in the region.

So I think, without Azattyk, we'd have had a lot more difficulty working out what's going on. And I'm very much looking forward to seeing the regional language radios of Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty expanding some of the work they're doing right now. And this at least is my dream.

I'm going to concentrate for about five minutes on – essentially on Kyrgyzstan and the implications of the recent events in Kyrgyzstan. I'd be happy to talk later about anything else you have in mind but I think my colleagues will also be working on this.

In essence, in my journalistic career, I have witnessed maybe five or six violent or unscheduled regime changes in various parts of the world. Most have been characterized by one or two features. The first one is, in many cases, when regime change takes place the new structure is so powerful, so well-organized that it creates a sense of inevitability about its ability

to retain power, creates the atmosphere, in other words, that the opponents of the regime would find it futile to try to oppose them in any major way. An example of that would be the North Vietnamese takeover of Saigon in 1975.

In other occasions there is usually a sense of euphoria among the populace, at least that their heroes have triumphed. This in turn is transformed into a certain cushion which allows the new regime to find its feet, to make some mistakes and get away with them.

The new Kyrgyz regime has neither of these. It is neither inevitable; it's not very powerful; it's not viewed as a wonderful force of renewal by most of the population. Though everybody, the vast majority of Kyrgyz people, were happy to see Kurmanbek Bakiyev leave the scene, they are not particularly enthused by the new leadership.

To carry out anything that they plan to achieve in the coming years they will be forced, to a large degree, to rely on a deeply corrupt regime. And this is going to further limit their own options.

A second point: Nothing that happened in Bishkek on April the 7th was intrinsic to Kyrgyzstan. The same thing could theoretically happen in most states of the region. The Bakiyev regime was not particularly intelligent, was not particularly far-sighted but they were well aware of the dangers of violent opposition. They talked about it a lot. They made it clear that they would respond with violence.

They created a large and well-trained security machine. This machine was well-trained, of course, in part because, thanks to U.S. military training. But the security machine did what similar organizations have done in many other countries in the world. And on occasions like this, at some point the security forces decided that they were not going to die for the dictator. And the regime crumbled very fast.

Another point: Despite the new regime's limited competence – I'm trying to be very polite – slow reactions, its internal divisions, it seems to worry its neighbors quite badly. It also worries Russia. Both the Central Asian neighbors and Russia have responded with surprising malevolence. The clearest example of this is Kazakhstan's closure of the border with Kyrgyzstan, which seems to – risks being a rather long prospect and which has had already a serious effect on Kyrgyzstan's very weak economy.

One can only assume that the reason for this is that even the rather lackluster group of people running Kyrgyzstan at the moment have broken essentially the fundamental rule of the Central Asian leadership club. They're talking of pluralism. They are paying lip service at least to the creation of a nonauthoritarian government. This clearly worries a number of countries in the region and may be behind the very dour Russian response to the new dispensation in Bishkek.

Finally, a theoretical point: The collapse of the regime in Kyrgyzstan last April undermined what should be obvious but is not always so, that authoritarian regimes are very

unreliable allies. They only look as if they are stable. They only look as if they can come through with their promises.

But when a Western nation allies itself with an authoritarian regime, they have no methods and none of the usual markers to gauge the depth of support or the depth of control of the regime. What we've seen happen in Kyrgyzstan recently is a series of events that has deeply discomfited the United States government in particular, but also a number of other Western countries who clearly thought that authoritarianism in Kyrgyzstan would last forever.

I think, I would very much hope that there's going to be a little more humility in looking at our analyses of these countries in the future. I would strongly hope that a number of Western nations have drawn the lessons from what happened in Kyrgyzstan, which is: Don't get too close to authoritarianism. But I also have to say that I am rather dubious that those lessons will be drawn.

MR. GEDMIN: Paul, thank you. That was rich and succinct. Eric, before I introduce you, I'm noting what you have before you there. Now, these are my notes for the panel. Can you hold up your notes? (Laughter.) Yes, that's impressive. (Laughter.)

ERIC MCGLINCHEY: Early adopter.

MR. GEDMIN: I will do better next time. Eric McGlinchey. Let me read a quotation to you. The quotation is from February – a paper, February 26, 2010. And the quotation is, "The same societal upheaval that brought Bakiyev to power will likely see him running from angry crowds in the not-too-distant future," close quote. Well, that wasn't bad. And so don't be surprised if we ask you to day what is next. Eric McGlinchey is a professor at George Mason University. He is a prolific writer. He is a well-respected expert on Central Asia here and there is held in very high esteem. We're glad you're with us. You have the floor.

MR. MCGLINCHEY: Thank you for the introduction. Does this sound okay? Okay. I want to both agree and disagree with Paul. And first, let me say I agree with the fact that regimes that appear stable often can collapse. That said, I want to forward the following analysis and that is: We could anticipate that Kyrgyzstan will be much more likely to collapse than Uzbekistan or Kazakhstan or for that matter even Turkmenistan. And let me offer you a logic for why that is. And this really – this whole five minutes or six minutes could be titled, "Why Gulnara and Timur – Timur Kulibayev can get away with it and Aidar and Maxim cannot."

And I want to explain this using three different steps: The first one, I'm going to talk about planes. Some of you might know that argument already. The second one, I want to talk about Sinatra and riots. And then the third thing I want to do is I want to link Sinatra riots and plains back to Central Asia. And yes, this is the right speech for today. (Laughter.)

The first thing that – the first point I want to make out and the first point I want to make and you might have seen this in the op-ed a month ago is if you look at the elite institutions of say these three countries, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan, they're very different. And I

liken them to two different kinds of planes. Kyrgyzstan has a little Cessna and Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan has a big 747.

And what that means is that whenever someone in the Kyrgyz government becomes problematic for the executive, the executive can toss this person from the plane, but he can only do it a few times because there's not too many people he can toss out. And the other thing it means for the Kyrgyz executive is the people in the back, the seven people in the back can easily get together and toss him out of the plane.

And in Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan, you have a much larger pro-presidential party. And what that means is if you're a minister, if you're, say, the first officer in the Kazakh or Uzbek plane, you're much less likely to rise up against the executive for a couple of reasons. One, if you rise up, you know that there's a lot of other people out there and if they form a new government, the likelihood that you will be one of the few people in this new government is pretty low. So you're in a pretty good position now; you don't want to risk that position.

The other thing is it's much more difficult to effect collective action. So it's much more difficult to go back into the passenger hold and say, hey, let's toss this guy out of the plane. So I think these are fundamentally different countries and because of that, we could say with some certainty that Kyrgyzstan is much more likely to experience upheaval than the other two.

Now, it doesn't mean that the other two won't and I think there's lots of reasons to anticipate why they would. But I think all other things equal, I do think Kyrgyzstan is much more unstable than is the other two countries. I could talk about Tajikistan and Turkmenistan; it just gets a little messy if I do that.

Now, what about Sinatra and the riots? Well, let me just briefly talk about three different riots that happened in Central Asia. And the dates are very important. Kazakhstan riots December 1986. Uzbekistan riots June 1989. Kyrgyzstan riots June 1990. Sinatra comes in, in February 1990.

And this is called the Sinatra doctrine. Gorbachev basically says, you know what? Communist Party, this is the end. I'm not going to back you anymore. Gorbachev is really trying to reform the Communist Party and is trying to bring in competitive elections. What this fundamentally means though, for Kyrgyzstan that has its riots after February – this February 1990 decision, basically this is Gorbachev telling everybody else, if you have a problem in your republic, I'm no longer going to come in and restore order.

And this is exactly what happened in Kyrgyzstan. After the riots in Osh in June 1990, Gorbachev essentially said to the Kyrgyz essentially said to the Kyrgyz political elite, solve it yourself and there was a huge mess and the elite fragmented. And this is where we get these three different planes: We get the little Cessna of fragmented political elites in Kyrgyzstan and we get these large, essentially Communist Party holdovers in Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan. So that's where we get the different institutions.

Now, the last point I want to make – and this is the implications for the three countries. And again, we could extend it to the other two as well. These are all highly corrupt governments. And the central goal of the leaderships in these governments is to steal as much money as they possibly can.

We can see, for example, Gulnara with Zeromax and all the wonderful things that she gets out of that with Sting coming to visit and with Julio coming to visit. She can do that and she doesn't have to really worry about pissing off the political elite. Same thing with Kulibayev; he can have his huge mansion outside of London, he can control lots of wealth and there's no real problem in that case either. And the logic, again, is this plane logic. It's unlikely that the political elite in these two countries are going to rise up and demand their fair cut of the pie.

We don't see this in Kyrgyzstan. So when Maxim starts taking everything from Manas, when Aidar did this before and the Kyrgyz political elite sees that the government is doing this, they're much more likely to rise up and overthrow the government. So I think there are long-term implications for what we see in Central Asia and unless something fundamentally changes, particularly Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan, to break apart this pro-presidential political elite, we're going to see a continuity of somewhat greater stability in these two countries and steady instability in Kyrgyzstan.

MR. GEDMIN: Eric, thank you. I'm a little bit astonished because I was saying to Diane, our communications director who organized this today with her team, I said, you can't expect that people are really going to speak five minutes, first of all, because they always speak for 25. And second of all, I said, and if they even tried to, they can't possibly be substantive in five minutes. So Daniel, you've got a lot of pressure. (Laughter.)

Daniel Kimmage, I think that the crown jewel in his career was he once worked for Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty. (Laughter.) He is a fantastic analyst and if you're interested in a range of topics, including how jihadists use social media and Internet, you want to read Daniel. And if you haven't read him, Google him. He is an Arabist. He is a Russia expert. He is a deep and – widely read and a deep reader. He has just recently published or co-authored a report published by CSIS on some of the issues we're talking about today.

And specifically, Daniel, you're going to talk to us a little bit, I think, now about Islamic extremism across Central Asia. Is it a threat? To what extent it's a threat. And I'll just put out for the audience consumption, you've argued, if I have it right, that it is a threat indeed and that one might expect terrorist actions. But I think you've written or with coauthors, it's a mythical idea to think that Islamic extremists would have the power to overturn governments.

But, Daniel, over to you.

DANIEL KIMMAGE: Thank you. That's an excellent lead-in; thank you very much. Hopefully I will not launch into a content-free 25-minute diatribe at this point.

Let me begin by saying that as Jeff noted, the militant threat in Central Asia in some ways is the dog that didn't bark. There has been quite a bit of material analysis pointing to this extremist threat in Central Asia and it has not materialized in the way that some thought it would.

Let me give a little bit of an overview and a diagnosis of where this stands today and then hopefully in the discussion we can talk about it in light of some of the instability that recent events in Kyrgyzstan have shone a spotlight on.

The first thing I would stress is that there is a group of militants in Central Asia or of Central Asian background who are active in the global jihadists movement. These are people whose history basically goes back to the early 1990s.

The leadership of this group goes back primarily to the Fergana Valley and primarily to Uzbekistan, where a group called Adalat emerged in the city of Namangan in the early 1990s. A core group of Uzbek extremists: When I say "extremists," I mean people who really wanted to fundamentally remake society in line with a very strict understanding of what they thought an Islamic society should be like and they were very willing to use violence to do this.

So that's where they come from. This group, in the 1990s, decamped to Tajikistan, where they hoped that the Tajik civil war would be a platform to begin installing their vision throughout Central Asia. That did not work out for them and they began looking farther afield.

In 1998, this group came to rest in Afghanistan – Taliban-run Afghanistan – and they established the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan. So it was still tied rhetorically and ideologically to Uzbekistan but it was physically mainly based in Afghanistan.

From there, this group began to pursue certain incursions in Central Asia in 1999 and 2000. They made incursions into Kyrgyzstan, to a certain extent Uzbekistan. The difficulty this group encountered is that, of course, when the U.S. military entered Afghanistan to go after al-Qaida in 2001, they lost their safe haven and they decamped to Pakistan and a new history, a new chapter in their history begins.

In terms of what they were actually able to do, the only real outburst of significant terrorist activity in their home region occurs in 2004 in Uzbekistan with a string of shoot-outs and attacks in Tashkent. It's somewhat unclear to this day who exactly was behind that.

The second half of the 2000s, where we see this Central Asia core militant group, this mainly Uzbek group, is really in Pakistan. That is where they end up, together with this soup of other organizations, with al-Qaida, with the Afghan Taliban, Pakistani Taliban.

Today, there are two organizational frameworks for this group. One is the Islamic Jihad Union; one is the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan. My personal sense is that we shouldn't fixate too much on these organizations – I don't think that's quite how it works on the ground. We can discuss that in the discussion.

But for the most part, these are sort of the organizational framework for these groups. So that is the background; that is where these groups are and this is who they are today. These are not groups that have demonstrated a great deal of capacity to mount operations elsewhere, yet there are signs that they are looking farther afield and there is a general convergence among some of these groups, abetted by media.

For example, both the Islamic Jihad Union and the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan have fairly active media operations. They publish magazines online; they have materials about their activities. So you can simply go to their website and you can get rundowns of the recent operations the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan claims to be carrying out, mainly in Afghanistan and Pakistan; you can get magazines by the Islamic Jihad Union. These are in Uzbek but they're available online.

What's interesting is that they are starting to sketch out a more global framework than their previous activities, say in the 1990s when they were mainly fixated on Central Asia. I would say that the best example of that is the recently published memoirs of a German who went to Pakistan to fight in the jihad. He was currently affiliated with the Islamic Jihad Union and he writes in his memoir, "My Path to the Paradise," in German. But it intersects with the materials that some of these Uzbek groups are publishing. So there are similar incidents described in both.

This is a link to Europe and in fact at the end of this memoir, he says that hopefully, this part of Pakistan is going to see the emergence of a new group of people who will have Western passports, European passports and will be able to take the jihad to Europe. So this is a continuation of that Central Asian path.

Now, let me move from there to an assessment of what this actually means for the region and where this stands today. I'm drawing this primarily from the report that Jeff referenced – this is the report that I did earlier this year at CSIS; I see one of my coauthors sitting in the second row, David Gordon. In this report, there are really four key judgments that I'd like to share with you – four things that I'd like you to take away from what I have said.

The first one goes back to this initial historical background, which is that they are still around. There is a group of Uzbek primarily but also Central Asian jihadists who survived the ejection from their native countries; they survived the authoritarian clampdown in those places; they survived the collapse of the Taliban regime; they have survived all of the fighting in Afghanistan and Pakistan. They are there. They are primarily based in Pakistan but they still exist.

The second is that these Central Asian militant networks, whether it's the IMU or the IJU, have primarily depended on external sanctuaries since the 1990s. Today these are primarily in the Pakistani tribal belt. What I'd ask you to bear in mind is that these areas now are under increasing pressure. They're under increasing pressure from drone strikes, friction with local residents and operations by the Pakistani army.

The third point I'd ask you to bear in mind is that pressure on these safe havens could induce some of these groups to begin to move. It could push some of these Central Asian

jihadists toward their home countries, to renew activities there. In the discussion I'd be happy to talk about why I think this is so but I think that pressure on these regions could begin to push them home.

Then the final thought I'd like to share with you is, exactly how serious a threat is this? What I would say is that as Jeff noted, this is not an existential threat to Central Asian stability. These are not groups that are really able to come to power as they are currently constituted. They don't have popular support; they don't have demonstrated capacity. This is, I would say, this is not the right framework to evaluate this threat. It's not as though we're going to see the black banners of the IMU waving in Tashkent.

The danger, rather, is that a militant influx – these people returning home could set off a destabilizing cycle where they carry out attacks, governments overreact, you have a general backdrop of authoritarianism in poor socioeconomic conditions and this sets off a destabilizing cycle and it sets off a destabilizing cycle at a time that is quite sensitive in the region's development. You have aging leaders nearing the ends of their lifespan; you have bad conditions; you have the authoritarianism that my colleagues talked about.

I think this is the main danger that I would talk about. So once again, we're not talking about the black banners of the IMU flying in Tashkent. We're rather talking about these groups potentially acting as a catalyst in a cycle of destabilization in Central Asia.

Thank you.

MR. GEDMIN: Daniel, thank you. Daniel, why does popular support matter? I mean, isn't it possible that jihadists, well armed, highly motivated, well financed could topple a government without popular support and rule a country without popular support?

MR. KIMMAGE: Sure. It's theoretically possible. I would say two things: For one, these movements, the way they are constituted is basically as revolutionary movements – political revolutionary movements. They want to change the political system; they want to come to power and popular support is part of their claim. It is part of the way that they conceptualize politics. They basically say that we want to bring a form of government that will be better for most of the people. So in a sense, it's something that they themselves claim.

On a pragmatic level, it just makes their job much easier if they do have popular support. If they are able to swim, like the proverbial Maoist guerillas, in the sea of the people, they can do what they do much more easily.

The final thing I would say is that there's a certain level of not so much popular support but potential sympathizers that these groups need. When that level drops below a certain amount, when there's virtually no one in the society who's receptive to their message – and I would argue that in most of central Asia, there's virtually no one who's receptive to this extremely radical message.

You have to remember that these groups have been rubbing elbows now not with ordinary people in Samarkand or Tashkent or Bishkek. They've been rubbing elbows with the cream of the crop of the international jihadists elite. So these guys are becoming very, very radical and very far from their roots. I would argue that without some tiny amount of popular support, it's hard for them even to find a common language.

In a sense, this is a bit of a black box. We don't know what level of popular support there is. Paul may have a better beat on this, certainly in Kyrgyzstan, than I do. But my sense is that this very radical global jihadist message is not something that falls on particularly receptive soil in Central Asia.

MR. GEDMIN: Thank you. Paul, I have a question for you but first to be abundantly clear, the text that I quoted from and what Daniel referenced to – it's published by CSIS, March 2010. The authors are Thomas Anderson, Daniel Kimmage, David Gordon, who is with us today. The title is "From the Fergana Valley to South Waziristan: The Evolving Threat of Central Asian Jihadists." So March 2010, CSIS.

Paul, the question I wanted to ask you – I've quoted everybody back to themselves today but not you yet. You wrote recently about Kyrgyzstan in the *International Herald Tribune* and I quote, "For Washington and the West, there are lessons if anyone wants to learn them. The key one is that authoritarian regimes are not only unpalatable allies, they are unreliable ones. They block all safety valves, free elections and media, democratic discourse, opposition. Change usually comes in an explosion. Dependence on them is both miserable ethics and poor strategy," close quote.

Now, I like that because I'm the president of a company called Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty. So that's very near and dear to our heart. How do you apply that practically to Central Asia, where the United States has interest in access to energy; the United States has interest in access to military bases; the United States has interest in thwarting Islamic extremists and radical Islam?

And, if I read you and hear you and Eric and Daniel correctly, these countries, by and large – and you'll tell me if I overstate – but by and large, at the top have governments and political systems that are dominated by political patronage and nepotism and deepest corruption. At the bottom, they have very weak civil society and extremists.

So what do you do? How do you juggle those equities? How do you intelligently and responsibly and realistically support and promote democracy?

MR. QUINN-JUDGE: U.S. policy in Central Asia, as far as I can see, really revolves around one issue right now. You've correctly gone through the whole list of possible options but it seems to be determined purely by the U.S. desire to extricate itself as quickly as possible from Afghanistan. Certainly U.S. policy in Kyrgyzstan revolved around one word: Manas, the air base which processes 50,000 troops heading to Afghanistan or coming from Afghanistan every month.

I would argue that the rather – the extremely blinkered and very short-term policy that is being pursued by the U.S. and by a number of other Western nations in Central Asia is not helping either them or the regimes that they're working in.

What you do: There is no simple answer. Certainly, by working very closely with deeply unpopular regimes, you are doing a number of negative things that I think you will come to regret in the long term.

One of them is by associating yourself so closely with a regime like Bakiyev's in Kyrgyzstan or Karimov's in Uzbekistan, you're undermining the very principles you claim to be espousing. That is perhaps not the best way to start trying to produce any fundamental change in the region.

Secondly, by obsessing about the status quo and using it to the best of your advantage for a very short-term policy, is once again one that does not seem to suggest that there is much interest in fostering democratic change in Central Asia.

The change is going to be a very long-term process. A couple of countries will not make much difference in the short term but there are areas where the EU and the United States have both failed to sneak out in the past few years where they really should have. We saw that very often in Kyrgyzstan during the period when journalists were being killed, when the media was being repressed. We've seen this in Uzbekistan.

It's very disconcerting to talk to U.S. officials these days and be told that if something goes wrong with the base in Manas, they're already looking for somewhere else and the first one on the list is Uzbekistan. I don't think that's a very exciting prospect for anybody who would like to see a move away from the status quo in the region.

MR. GEDMIN: Eric – thank you, Paul – you, on the other hand, wrote recently, quote, “As harsh as this may sound, there are no immediate prospects for democracy in Central Asia.”

Paul hasn't actually contradicted that.

MR. QUINN-JUDGE: No. No.

MR. GEDMIN: He said that this is a very long-term process. But when I read you, Eric, I have the feeling – correct me if I'm wrong – that you began your research and travel and studies perhaps a little bit more optimistic and for a variety of reasons – you can tell us, if so, why – you have become – should I say you have minimal expectations in the area of democratic development? Can you tell us if that's true? Why?

MR. MCGLINCHEY: I think that's a correct assessment. I think, frankly, we have to starve the Kyrgyz government. I think we should cut off all money to Kyrgyzstan, essentially. Not necessarily the stuff that ICG's doing and other groups are doing, but the money doesn't help.

Let me give you a concrete example of what I mean. If you look at Akayev, he was in power from 1990 to 2005 – 15 years. If you look at Bakiyev, he was in power from 2005 to 2010 – five years. So I've given you one explanation for why there's greater instability in Kyrgyzstan and not in Uzbekistan and not Kazakhstan but I haven't given you an explanation for why we see variation in Kyrgyzstan.

I would argue the reason why we see variation in Kyrgyzstan is we propped up Kyrgyzstan for 15 years. Democratization aid propped up Kyrgyzstan and Akayev for 15 years. The way this worked was Akayev could not directly capture this money – this was diffuse money given to different organizations, perhaps under the executive but not directly to him. That is exactly what you need for patronage to work in a system like you have in Kyrgyzstan. You have to share the wealth.

Two-thousand-one (2001) changed that. Idar (ph) and Adeel (ph) suddenly got this windfall and the nature of foreign aid and money to Kyrgyzstan changed and that led to the precipitous collapse of the Akayev regime. It didn't change in 2005: We had the same kind of funding stream and again, you get the same kind of instability when the executive can easily capture these kind of rents in a place like Kyrgyzstan. That's when you see the most instability.

So all that really we've done with democratization aid in the best-case scenario, that is, for seven, eight years, is help maintain a not particularly pernicious form of authoritarianism but nonetheless authoritarianism. So I'm not quite sure what we can do but I don't think what we've done so far – and when I say "we" I mean the entire international community – has been in the interest of accelerating reforms in this country.

MR. GEDMIN: Can we go back, Eric, to something you said in your initial presentation about prospects and likelihood for change generally? You made a case of why Kyrgyzstan is different, for example, from Uzbekistan.

Let me ask the question this way: In a country like Uzbekistan, which is arguably the most vicious and repressive in that region – and there's a lot of competition – can you speculate with us how it will evolve or how it will change? Because whether small, medium or large or what kind of aircraft or analogy –

Back to Paul's point, or what I read from his *International Herald Tribune* column: We do know from history that, astonishingly, that we shouldn't be astonished, that dictatorships tend to be inherently unstable. It's Pinochet in Chile and it's Marcos in the Philippines and it's Erich Honecker in East Germany. Each and every time we're convinced that a dictatorship is stable, we're astonished and I'm suggesting we shouldn't be.

In the case of Uzbekistan, it may be less likely to embrace or undergo political reform or change than Kyrgyzstan. But I'm suggesting to you it's still a dictatorship and a bloody one and therefore probably unstable. How could it change? How could it evolve? What could collapse it?

MR. MCGLINCHEY: It's a great question. I think Daniel provides some of the answers – your interchange about the popularity of IMU and IJU. I think back to when Namangani and Yuldash were able to mobilize the largest number of crowds – this was November 1991, they got their largest number of crowds – and they got their largest number of crowds because they weren't radical or they weren't Islamist at the time. They were basically trying to bring order back to Namangan.

And that was a message that resonated in the population. I would say the same thing happened in Andijon in 2005, with a bit more of an economic overtone. I've seen the same thing in Karshi with Rustam Klichev, an imam in Karshi. I've seen the same thing in Kokand.

There are deeply structured networks of civil society in Uzbekistan. Those networks just happen to revolve around Islam. And there's a whole reason why they're evolved around Islam but there is an amazing force that could very quickly, I think, change the politics of that country. And frankly, I think that might be a force that we want to embrace rather than fear.

MR. GEDMIN: Daniel, I was going to say, if you “were” to advise U.S. officials, but you “do” advise – (chuckles) – a lot of people in the United States government. On the subject of promoting democracy and support for human rights and respect for rule of law, what are those things that come to mind generally for Central Asia that one ought to pursue and ought to avoid? And if you have any specific advice for each or every country or differentiation, I'd be happy to hear that, too.

MR. KIMMAGE: I think that the simplest thing I would say is we should always be aware of how what we say resonates in the region and try to avoid moments that are going to make people wince.

We're going to pursue our national interests and they're not always going to accord with the wishes of democracy activists in Kyrgyzstan or Tajikistan. We have military operations in Afghanistan that we're going to support.

I think that some of this is simply how we present things, and we should present them honestly. We should not pretend that an authoritarian regime is a thriving democracy simply because it is helping us. I think that that actually does an enormous amount of damage.

It's interesting when you travel in the region and talk to people about how they perceive Russia, for example, compared to how they perceive the U.S. One of the – people will sometimes criticize the Russians for being heavy-handed; for a variety of things. But they're generally quite positive in the fact that the Russians are honest that they're out for their interests. The Russians are there; they have certain aims; they're not there to build democracy; there's not a lot of B.S.

Their complaint about the U.S. is that there's a lot of B.S. There's all sorts of very pretty talk about this, that and the other thing. The U.S., unsurprisingly, acts like almost every other country in its interests. I think that we can simply be upfront about that. And I think that we

also don't have to always be totally single-minded. It is possible to pursue our national interests in supplying operations in Afghanistan while at the same time promoting democratic ideals.

We do not always have to be entirely nice or entirely nasty. This seems to me a sort of pernicious myth that has emerged after the Cold War. Not everything that worked during the Cold War is going to work today.

But one thing to remember during the Cold War is that if you look at some of the greatest breakthroughs in U.S.-Soviet relations, they occurred as the U.S. was covertly supporting an insurgency against the Soviet Union, okay. The U.S. was doing both of these things at the same time.

Everyone knew it; the Soviets knew it. And yet, we were able to reach very productive agreements on many, many things, and in fact, had one of the most productive periods in relations. That's not, obviously, the model to apply in Central Asia but it's one that's worth recalling in that these are large and complex interactions that can have more than one moving part.

So those, I would say, are the two things: that we should be honest and upfront, not paint dictators as democrats. And secondly, we should have the boldness, I think, to pursue our national interests along a number of fronts at the same time.

MR. GEDMIN: Daniel, thank you. Following from that, Paul, I want to ask you a question which, if you would share with us your experience. You're living there right now in Kyrgyzstan in Bishkek.

Daniel, you talked about interests and values and the balance and interplay between the two. I was in Afghanistan last month in Kabul visiting our bureau. We have a bureau in Bishkek; we have a bureau in Kabul.

And I met in Kabul with the leader of a mosque who said to me very simply, we understand you Americans have your interests; pursue them, but I ask you that you care for the Afghan people, too. And that struck me as an incredibly reasonable, poignant and honest thing to say.

What do you hear, Paul, not from government officials or people of privilege, but when you're interacting and living there and mixing and mingling among people about the United States and what our intentions are and what our behavior is like? How do people see us? And where are people disappointed? And where do people have expectations?

MR. QUINN-JUDGE: I think if you are dealing with the elite, the expectations are fairly banal and fairly obvious. The current elite is very keen to get support from any sources possible. They seem willing to do – come to an agreement on the base, at least in the short term, in order to get that.

If you're talking to people in the street, the United States crops up very rarely. You'd normally have to ask a question about it. This is not something that's very much on people's minds. It's one of the few countries I've worked in where a major military base is in fact an extremely discrete installation. You have very little sign of the base when you're in Bishkek or even less when you're traveling around the countryside.

MR. GEDMIN: Do other great powers come up? Russia, China, their interests, their meddling, their involvement, their support?

MR. QUINN-JUDGE: China, of course, because China is – the role and the importance of China is dawning on everybody in the region. If you talk to people in the street in Kyrgyzstan, it's much more concern about the perceived growth of Chinese newcomers in major cities – Bishkek and Osh and elsewhere. Also, some of the measures the Chinese have taken to buy or to lease large areas of land with natural resources in them, especially around Issyk-Kul, which is one of the major resorts and cultural areas for most Kyrgyz.

The Russians are always viewed with a sort of passive sympathy. If you take any of the public opinion polls which are published in Kyrgyzstan – and they're not particularly reliable but they're quite frequent – one of the questions is, would you as a Kyrgyz-born person like to have Russian citizenship? And the answer usually is yet. How far that's a real desire to merge somehow with Russian culture and how far it's a repudiation of the inability of your own leaders to run the country is something I can't tell. But certainly, at the moment, I think Russia maintains a certain subliminal support among many ordinary Kyrgyz.

MR. GEDMIN: Paul, thank you. We have 30 minutes for Q&A. The floor is open. We have microphones in the front. This gentleman, please, and if you would identify yourself.

Q: Good afternoon. Jeff Goldstein from the Open Society Institute. Eric, I just wanted to ask, your two 747s are both piloted by septuagenarians, neither of whom seems to be interested in training the next generation of pilots to take over for them. How does the succession issue affect the calculation in terms of – how much of a wild card is it in terms of stability of these countries?

MR. MCGLINCHEY: Jeff, thank you for your question. I think that's the small amount of hope we have, right? That is, Papa Nyvechin (ph). So these guys are going to die soon, maybe, perhaps. There are signs that – clue that Bayev is being drained or Gulmada (ph) when she is not kind of singing in the opera house or playing ambassador is thinking about these things.

But I think that's right. I think Turkmenistan caught us all off-guard a little bit – well, not all of us. I mean, some people, I think, predicted it would be a smooth transition. But I think the succession problem is always the big one. And the challenge that these two autocrats face is as soon as they begin grooming someone, then they appear weak. So it's a bit of a catch 22: When do you start this process? And there have been starts but they've all been false starts.

And this, I think, getting back to Paul's point about – these things look stable but can collapse. This logic, I think, is the main one right now, driving the potential instability in these countries. I'd add one more in Kazakhstan, and that is the oil. And this is always a wild card. And if the oil doesn't remain at a high price and if it drops below, say, \$40 a barrel, I think the country could be in trouble. But I think that's the key issue right there, is the succession problem. And there's no clear way to resolve that.

Q: Hello, I'm David Abramson with the State Department. And I wanted to pick up on Daniel's presentation a little bit. Arguably, Kyrgyzstan has not been a target of terrorist attacks largely because of its more moderate policies, in general, and also that if they were to – if they had a major target in Kyrgyzstan, then the government would crack down more forcibly and then it wouldn't be the sort of pseudo safe haven for planning attacks on Uzbekistan or elsewhere.

So I'm just wondering, how is the situation that you described in Afghanistan and Pakistan changing as well as the changing situation in Kyrgyzstan affect that? And your characterization of those aging regimes does not really apply to the situation in Kyrgyzstan at this moment, even though it could be quite vulnerable.

MR. KIMMAGE: I mean, as far as the really militant networks go, I think that Kyrgyzstan, at least in their public statements and actions, has been sort of a conduit – a way of getting at Uzbekistan. It doesn't seem to show up very much. You don't find diatribes about the apostate regime in Bishkek. I mean, maybe they're somewhere deeply hidden in the Internet but I haven't really seen them.

So Kyrgyzstan tends to show up as a way of getting at Uzbekistan, which is what we saw in the past. One of the wild cards in this, of course, is that what's happening in Kyrgyzstan right now – Paul talked about violating the compact of Central Asian rulers, which is you don't go close to pluralism, et cetera – is interesting because it starts to kind of shuffle the deck. And it's not clear to me how some of these truly militant networks would react, for example, to a freer atmosphere.

So one of the untested assumptions in Central Asia has been – and one of the arguments the authoritarian regimes have always made is – we need to keep the lid on tight because you don't know what's in there. Well, maybe we'll finally actually get a chance to find out. Certainly, the lid has not been on as tight in Kyrgyzstan as other places and I – once again, I defer to Paul – I don't see lots of extremely radical stuff bubbling around there.

That said, shifting gears away from these very militant networks, I'd say that one of the interesting questions about Kyrgyzstan today is, is this – I actually saw, I think, an article today before I came here. The headline was, could a second legal Islamic party emerge in Kyrgyzstan?

The only legal Islamic party in Central Asia is in Tajikistan, the Islamic Renaissance Party, which has seen better days.

MR. QUINN-JUDGE: Which is in crisis at the moment, yes.

MR. KIMMAGE: Which has been in crisis for quite some time, actually. (Chuckles.) And so one of the questions is, leaving aside the militants who are few in number and have, I think, limited prospects in Kyrgyzstan, one of the questions I would actually ask my colleague is, what are the prospects for, say, a moderate politics/reformist politics informed by some vision of Islam in the public space in Kyrgyzstan at this point?

MR. QUINN-JUDGE: At the moment, the new regime shows the same lack of interest in having any dialogue with the Islamic community that its predecessors did. And this is deeply unfortunate. This would be the ideal opportunity for them to do so.

They will have to eventually start talking to more radical, though not necessarily violent, Islamist groups in the South if they really do want to have a stable situation, especially in the South. It would be good if they started talking to Hezbotaria (ph).

When you discuss such issues with the new leadership in Kyrgyzstan, they are clearly uninterested by the subject and certainly have no plans to do so. I talked to one of them about it recently. And he said, well, of course, I talk to Islamists all the time; a delegation came to see me recently. And that's their approach. They're waiting to be approached in the usual futile manner.

At the moment, there seems to be no sign of this. There's nobody thinking in this direction. And so far as we can see, the Islamic community and the Islamist community in Kyrgyzstan was very much a passive and probably rather skeptical bystander to the whole change.

MR. GEDMIN: Paul, Daniel mentioned Tajikistan in passing. As a non-expert sitting up here, it seems to me that Tajikistan might be a case – a prospect for quite tumultuous activity. It has, I believe, a 1,000-mile border with Afghanistan, a weak central government, terrible corruption problems, terrible poverty problems and problems with Islamic extremism.

I'm borrowing a phrase or collocation you used with me in passing a few months ago. I think you said that Tajikistan is a candidate for becoming a failed state. Is that true? And what does that mean?

MR. QUINN-JUDGE: Well, we'd been talking a lot here about essentially the inversion of values of governance in Central Asia. That you have governments that have the usual organogram of government but in fact exist to assure the creation of wealth for the top leadership and a sudden trickle down of corrupt wealth to other senior officials.

Tajikistan is no exception. It is in fact a prime example of this. I think if one asked many officials around here, and including some in the room, about who oversaw the drug trade in Tajikistan, we'd end up with names that were very close to the ruling family.

Given that, given Tajikistan's horrendous poverty, given the collapse of the country's infrastructure – the crumbling of the infrastructure; it hasn't fully collapsed yet – given the tiny amount of money allocated to issues of social welfare, education and health in the country, one

can imagine a very quiet but dramatic decline of life expectancy, of the remaining quality of life in Tajikistan.

It's quite clear that the leadership is not interested in anything to do with long-term planning. Their work on the – they've recently been raising money allegedly for the Rogun Dam. There are some doubts where that money is going and how far this money could be used.

I think it would not be hard to imagine a few years from now, a regime that looked very good if you were in Dushanbe and essentially ceased to exist when you left the city. That's the sort of decline that I fear because it's the sort of decline that nobody would notice and very few people outside would care about.

Q: Cathy Cosman, U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom. I'm rather surprised that in this discussion of potential extremism, radicalism, et cetera, there's been no discussion of the various governments' policies towards Islam and other religions which, not to put too fine a point on it, is more than secular. It's actively hostile.

And if one is looking at sources for potential radicalization of major portions of those populations, all one has to do is look at the religion laws about which my organization has recently issued several reports.

And furthermore, what one could do while keeping in mind our various national interests regarding Central Asia – which I agree with Mr. Quinn-Judge seems to be largely as a forwarding area to Afghanistan in a military sense – one could look at international standards on freedom of religion or belief and apply them to those laws and call those governments to account. It's not that difficult. It shouldn't be, anyway.

MR. KIMMAGE: I can only plead that the limitations on time precluded me from going into this. I agree. One of the most potent forces for radicalization in Central Asia is the policies of most of the governments on religion and the foreclosure of any real space to talk about or practice religion. It's one of the biggest problems; it's an ongoing problem; it's very well-documented.

The only question I would raise is that it's – and I would actually sort of almost go back to you and say, we don't seem to have found the right way of exerting pressure or actually sparking any kind of positive legislative change in these countries over the last 20 years with the religion laws. They don't seem to get better; they only seem to get worse.

And I think it's – I don't have a silver-bullet solution. I don't know what the solution is. I agree entirely that it is a very big part of the problem, but it is not entirely clear which approach is going to work in terms of improving some of the legislative framework. But I would say that the state of the laws as documented in the U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom's reports, Forum 18's reports, is definitely a factor for radicalization.

Q: I can offer one possible suggestion, which is, when we engage in police training, we may want to point out that in many of these countries – Tajikistan, for example. I recently met

with some police units from that country. The same group that is concerned with organized crime is concerned with so-called “extremism,” which has a very liberal and widespread definition in most of those countries. So we might try to point out to them, in terms of police training, that this is not a productive way of treating the problem.

MR. MCGLINCHEY: I just wanted to add one thing, and I almost hesitate to do it, because I know David’s in the room and he can speak to this better than I can, but there are pretty substantive differences among these countries. And I remember sitting with Kaypov – I think it was Kaypov, in 2006 or – the minister of justice in Kyrgyzstan – and they’d just passed an NGO law requiring some kind of crazy registration thing. And he stressed, it’s really just the Muslim groups that we’re worried about. And then he backed away, and a couple months later, they revoked this law.

And what this illustrates to me is that, you know, Kyrgyzstan might have really nasty laws on the books, or just not enlightened laws on the books, but they can’t do anything about it. So the atmosphere for Islam in Kyrgyzstan, although it’s not great, it’s certainly very different than it is in Uzbekistan. So I guess, while I would agree with everything you’ve said, at the same time, I think it would be helpful to take into account these variations and look at some of the stuff we have been doing on the margins.

And David Hunziger (sp) is not here, but he was doing work with ABA a couple years ago. It was called the street crime project or the street law project – street law, not street crime; street law. And AID was working directly with madrassas, and it was a great program, and I think it was very effective. So this happened in Kyrgyzstan; it couldn’t happen in Uzbekistan. So we have to recognize where the variations are and then use the space that does exist to perhaps do some incremental things.

Q: I’ve been told that the provisional government in Kyrgyzstan – in southern Kyrgyzstan – anyone who wears a hijab is not allowed in a public office.

Q: I’m Dick Rowson from the Council for a Community of Democracies. And I wanted to ask a question apropos of this last point. The Community of Democracies is considering a professional global exchange program that would deal with democracy activists from countries such as Kyrgyzstan and countries in the community of democracies who have recently gone through a transition to democracy.

And it would be initiated by having representatives of civil society groups meet together to discuss the importance and the utility of such exchanges, and then to organize bilateral exchanges on the part of the many countries – there are 120 of them in the community of democracies – to bring together people who have gone through these processes, who started from an authoritarian base, to discuss with those, such as representatives in Kyrgyzstan or other places, who would like to make that transition. Do you all – I ask this of any of you – consider this to be a practical program that would have real moment in terms of change taking place in this area?

MR. GEDMIN: I'm going to suggest that one of you take it. Who wants to take it? Paul, over to you.

MR. QUINN-JUDGE: Civil society is indeed quite well-developed, at least numerically, in Kyrgyzstan, and at least among the secular part of society. So there are a number of activists who would be very interested in such exchanges of experience and techniques. The other side of it, however, is, frankly, I would like to see the civil society movements in Kyrgyzstan working together more themselves on the problems facing the country at the moment.

To talk about a further transition to anything at the moment in Kyrgyzstan, given the political uncertainty within the regime and within the country as a whole leads me to feel that this initiative would be rather worthwhile, but is rather premature.

MR. GEDMIN: Paul, you have an accent that doesn't sound perfectly American.

MR. QUINN-JUDGE: Ah, you've noticed, yes, yeah. (Laughter.) The British don't think so; they think I'm an American and I make rude remarks about Britain.

MR. GEDMIN: What is the European Union doing in these matters – activity, progress, engagement?

MR. QUINN-JUDGE: No, no. They're lamentably bad. (Laughter.) I could expand, but that really wraps it up. The EU is – has expressed its concern and has not, so far, as far as I can see, been able to formulate a policy. The creation of an EU external relations operation and the appointment of a British parliamentarian to run it has not had any appreciable effect. At the moment, I see nothing coming from the EU in any efforts to solve the many problems in the transition in Kyrgyzstan. Surprisingly, I see the United Nations acting in a much more active, coherent and even cogent manner.

Q: Mitchell Pullman. I recently returned from Tajikistan, where I was a longtime elections observer for the OSCE, so I wanted to go back to Tajikistan because I think it's actually – tie in a number of things that were said here – Daniel said. It was my experience – actually, I think the same could be said for all of my colleagues – that it was actually the Islamic Revival Party in Tajikistan which is really talking openly about issues such as corruption, improving the health system, the education system, and is really the force for change in Tajikistan.

And I think what Daniel said earlier – I hesitate to use the word “embrace.” I don't think that's really a terribly good word, but perhaps defend the rights of the Islamists, as well as other members of the opposition, what few of them there are – (chuckles) – against the government is important. And I have to add that actually, the U.S. Embassy in Dushanbe was, in fact, very outspoken. They even had their own elections monitoring mission in Tajikistan, and it didn't go unnoticed, I think, amongst the populous. But it is my concern that when we talk about Islamists, that we not all group them together.

One candidate that we had that – whose district we were watching – said in our very last meeting after the elections that he was very concerned that this sort of fraud was, in fact, going to

give fodder to the militants within the Islamic Revival Party, which are not very numerous now. But he said we entered these elections in the hopes that, you know, by participating in the process, it would dampen the extremism. But now we're seeing that the fraud that has occurred has only given more ammunition to the extremists.

MR. KIMMAGE: No, I would just – thank you very much – I would just stress one more time that these are basically two separate phenomena we're talking about here. There are these, I would say, isolated and quite marginal fanatics who are, for the most part, hiding out somewhere in Pakistan. And I wouldn't even view this on the same continuum as people who have some sort of Islamist politics, for the most part, in Central Asia – certainly not in the IRP in Tajikistan. I would just stress that these are separate phenomena.

MR. QUINN-JUDGE: And the tragedy of the IRP is that fact that they do try to play to political game and they lose because they are faced with massive fraud by the government, and this fraud goes unpunished and largely unnoticed outside a very narrow community.

Q: I also just want to – quick comment that they also were very, very emphatic that they want – do not want an Islamic state. They want a secular society. I do believe them on that, too.

MR. GEDMIN: Okay. Thank you. Please?

Q: I'm Nancy Lubin, J&A Associates. And I guess I have a broad question, but sort of the undercurrent here. Back in 1993, it must be now, we did a big public opinion survey of 2,000 people – Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan, more than that. And one part focused on international assistance – the prospect for it – and overwhelmingly, those people who wanted assistance in these countries overwhelmingly wanted it from Japan, Europe and the United States.

And Russia was far lower on the list. The hopes were really high. In 2007, we did the survey again with the same kind of sample – the same group taking it out – and this time, Europe, Japan and the United States were all at the bottom of the heap, and overwhelmingly, Russia was the clear winner.

Part of this, I'm sure, is due to the duplicity, the hypocrisy mentioned here in formal discussions. Part of it is just a sense that with all the election monitoring, it's a great thing, but nothing ever changes – you know, there's a little noise for a while. And a great deal of it seems to be that no matter what sector – health, education, drugs, you name it – we're only feeding a corrupt system, in some ways making it worse.

So my question to you is, particularly in areas like drug trafficking, where we have no way of doing vetting or law enforcement – we have no way of doing vetting of any kind and no way of holding these areas accountable, but in other areas, too, is there anything that we can usefully do, particularly in the law enforcement area? Or should we back off and start to look at other ways of doing things where we can ultimately make a difference?

MR. KIMMAGE: I would say, very quickly, that the first rule in all of this should be, do no harm. So I don't think we should rush into ill-advised partnerships with interior ministries to

provide training unless we really, really know what we're doing. And I would argue that we probably don't know, in any situation.

The only thing I would say is that, in terms of the survey results you talk about, the only example of prosperity that most people in Central Asia have actually seen up close and personal is Russia, particularly in the 2000s. So that seems like a very natural progression, with the association of Russia as a thriving and wealthy state. But I think that there are some examples of things that are beneficial. I would actually ask my colleagues. I don't know any examples of some of the more – the interior ministry stuff that has actually been very successful.

Q: Well, just, maybe to follow up, because I know some of you mentioned drug trafficking, you know, we – with the drug control agency we set up in Tajikistan and then the drug courts, or whatever, there's a wide-ranging sense, even among many foreigners on the ground, that we are training, equipping and funding traffickers to traffic better. Should we pull out? Or is there a way that we can be doing those kinds of programs better?

MR. KIMMAGE: If that's the sense, I'd say maybe pull out.

MR. QUINN-JUDGE: You're wasting your money on drug control in Tajikistan, totally. And the efforts to try to tighten up border controls have, by the admission of the people who are working on it, not had any appreciable effect.

MR. MCGLINCHEY: I assign your article in my class – the one that essentially – (laughter) – that makes this argument. And I think it's a brilliant argument. I mean, it's a true – I mean, I suppose you've seen it more than anyone, so it's pretty clear to you and it comes across in your article. But as far as what can be done, I mean, funding executive agencies in these countries is a dead end and we got to stop doing that. So that's what I mean by we have to starve these governments.

But funding Azattyk isn't a dead end and funding the printing press Uchkun is not a dead end. I mean, there's lots of stuff that one can do that's not through the executive agency that can be done. And to the extent that Azattyk does a very good job covering, there was a great piece, was it, two days ago in Azattyk about drugs in southern Kyrgyzstan. To the extent that you can get this information out and the implications of doing this and reach society, then there's no harm in doing that and you're certainly not funding traffickers in that respect.

MR. GEDMIN: Eric, thank you. We want to wrap up. My notes are messy, but – not as clean as yours, but I've just scribbled here in the margins repeated reference to additional funding for RFE/RL in – (inaudible, laughter) – seems to have come up. If I heard it wrong, but it seems to have come up.

First of all, thank everybody for coming. You have to admit, even in Washington, D.C., how many rooms can you be in where someone stands up and says, I recently returned from Tajikistan, you know? So this was a unique and remarkable group of people here in the audience and the panel. In closing, Daniel, in 60 seconds or less, U.S. policy – one thing you recommend

strongly and one thing to avoid – and avoid, you can't say, do no harm; you have to be more specific.

MR. KIMMAGE: (Chuckles.) Okay, I'm going to repeat what I said earlier and say that we really need to – and in Russian there's a phrase: (In Russian.) To call things by their real name. And I think that we need to do more of that, particularly in our official discourse on Central Asia. Don't call dictators democrats just because they're helping you out. Okay? I'll leave it at that.

MR. GEDMIN: Thank you. Eric, same question, but not the region; Uzbekistan.

MR. MCGLINCHEY: I was going to say Kyrgyzstan, but – I just finished revising the Kyrgyz chapter for the book, so I'm going to take the opportunity to take an example out of that. So Mike McFaul, NSC right now – 2001 he published an article talking about how liberalization in Kyrgyzstan was possible because of the personal agency of Akayev. This is a strong person and this could bring about reform.

In, what was it, two weeks ago, he said, we can no longer count on the government; we have to count on the people. To the extent that someone like Mike can go from putting all of his eggs in one basket with a leader to actually realizing that this is not a fruitful policy, be it Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan or any of the countries, I think that's a major change. And to the extent that we can shift away from the executive in any of these countries, I think that's a positive.

MR. GEDMIN: Thank you. Paul, finally, in conclusion, tempted to ask you about grand strategy and U.S., EU policy. But Paul –

MR. QUINN-JUDGE: EU policy doesn't exist, so that's –

MR. GEDMIN: – what is it like living there day-to-day for you? I mean, do you get ESPN and American baseball at night? How do you live – (laughter) – how do you interact, how do you travel? Say a couple words about what it's like living there right now.

MR. QUINN-JUDGE: Well, it's a very comfortable place to live. I don't, despite the concerns of some of the crisis group directors about the place. (Laughter.) Bishkek is a small, provincial town rather than a capital. It's a very attractive one. There are a couple of good restaurants. You spend your time by working a lot because there's not very much else to do. And we've been having trouble with the security police for the last years, which means that I don't go out in the evenings. Other than that, I can't really think of anything interesting to say about it. You should come here and have a look at it.

MR. GEDMIN: So two restaurants and you don't go out at night is not the finest recommendation, but we will consider coming to visit. (Laughter.)

MR. QUINN-JUDGE: Come in the daytime.

MR. GEDMIN: So then, to Chairman Berman and the committee and his staff, thank you very much, Jen, International Crisis Group, all of you. And please join me in thanking a terrific panel. (Applause.)

(END)