



20 years of Kyrgyz- German relations

MAKING AID WORK: SECURITY AND DEVELOPMENT IN THE KYRGYZ REPUBLIC BISHKEK-LONDON VIDEOLINK

TRANSCRIPT

PREFACE

Dr Maxim Ryabkov, OSCE Academy in Bishkek and Professor Sally N. Cummings, University of St Andrews

On 23 November 2012 the OSCE Academy in Bishkek co-organized a roundtable on aid effectiveness in Kyrgyzstan with the assistance in the UK of the Kyrgyz-British Society, the Universities of St Andrews and Kent and in Bishkek the American University in Central Asia. The date of this roundtable fell two and a half years after the June 2010 events in Osh and surrounding areas. Its aim was thus to discuss the effectiveness of aid provided by the (Western) donors with a human security and human rights agenda who intended to mitigate the consequences of the conflict. This is the transcript of the roundtable's videoconference discussion that took place simultaneously in London and Bishkek.

June 2010 witnessed massive clashes in Osh, Jalalabad and adjacent territories. The mobilization, albeit not massive, reached as far as Bishkek. Varying reports described how the clashes resulted in hundreds of thousands of largely Uzbek refugees, several hundred dead, and thousands of dwellings destroyed and burned down. The international community provided humanitarian aid. International donors and NGOs initiated projects of mediation and reconciliation. The participants do not, of course, reach a consensus on the effectiveness of such international interventions in Kyrgyzstan in 2010-2012. Both sides are shown; some frustration with the assistance efforts, however, is the starting point of the discussion.



20 years of Kyrgyz- German relations

There are a number of detailed factual accounts of the Kyrgyz-Uzbek clashes in June 2010, although none has as yet arrived at a definitive explanation of what happened. Even less systematic are accounts of the subsequent events, including the activities of the international, both Western and non-Western actors. The facts are scattered around the public and institutional information spaces, and analysis is still largely absent. What were the obstacles for humanitarian aid to reach the needy? How did the redistribution of property and political influence occur in the aftermath of the tragic event? All these questions remain largely unanswered.

The videolink between Bishkek and London brought together some leading scholars and practitioners of international development, who had first-hand experience of the problem of aid effectiveness in the context of the conflict.

During the discussion alternative perspectives on the aid-conflict link were proposed. One perspective views the international intervention as a politically neutral and locally accepted force that feeds the refugees and mediates between the parties to the conflict. Peace is fundamentally desired by all and there is a basic consensus on the final goal of reconciliation process. Another way to look at the situation is to regard the international presence as an alien force that is resisted and tolerated to the extent that funds flows into the hands of relevant local and national elites. Couched in these terms, the question “does aid help peace?” is then answered depending on whether “peace” is a common objective or an empty signifier concealing political, economic and ethnic interests and cleavages.

A related question is the role and function of the Kyrgyz state before and after the conflict. As one shall see from the below transcript, this question is also linked to a very practical issue of whether aid is intended to help state institutions to overcome their weakness and assert benevolent control over a territory, or to force political elites into partial compliance with the will of the international community.



20 years of Kyrgyz- German relations

A further conceptual quarrel relates to the concept of a weak state as applied to Kyrgyzstan. According to one view, aid effectiveness is hampered by the growing gaps in state capacity to govern and provide; according to another, the problem rather lies in the divergence of the agendas pursued by, on the one hand, the national institutions and elites, and, on the other, international donors.

We leave it to the reader to take in the original discussion through the transcript below. Quite predictably participants did not achieve a consensus and implicitly agreed to disagree. Perhaps this attests to the frankness and, eventually, usefulness of the discussion. We would like to thank all the sponsors of this event (listed below), whose financial and in-kind contributions made this gathering of experts possible.

January 2013



20 years of Kyrgyz- German relations

TRANSCRIPT

- **(Sally Cummings)** Maxim, Hello. Nice to hear you.
- **(Maxim Ryabkov)** Nice to hear you too.
- **(Sally Cummings)** Shall we start?
- **(Maxim Ryabkov)** Yes, I think everybody is here.
- **(Sally Cummings)** Fantastic. It is great to see everyone.
- **(Maxim Ryabkov)** Ok. Sally. I think may be you start.
- **(Sally Cummings)** Ok. First of all, it is fantastic that we managed to link up. It is a great pleasure to see Bishkek in London and we are really looking forward to our discussion. This idea was couched a few months ago. Of course, we are extremely grateful for the support of the OSCE Academy. Without your support we could not be here today. I just really want to emphasise that primarily. Over the proceedings we will be looking, as we know, primarily at the link between development and security, specifically in Kyrgyz context. I hope that this will prove a very frank forum for discussion so we can look at some of the lessons that we are learning as some of these major challenges are confronted both by domestic and international community. Again a big hello and I think I will stop there and thank you again for the OSCE Academy for your support. I now hand over, if I may, to John Collis, who is a chairman of the Kyrgyz-British society.
- **(John Collis)** Good morning Maxim, good morning everyone. It is good to see you all here. Nice to see you again Maxim. Thanks Sally. The technological element of this has been gratefully provided to us by Ashurst International Law Firm. The Kyrgyz-British Society cannot have them and Ashurst has been very kind to provide



20 years of Kyrgyz- German relations

these facilities including a technical link-up from London. So thank you very much. Just a brief bit of news about the Kyrgyz- British society: it will not be the Kyrgyz-British society for much longer. Currently, it is a non-for-profit organisation but its name will be changing to the Kyrgyzstan Foundation and its status will be changing to a charity, which, we think, much better reflects the international membership and interest in the work we do and we hope that you will carry on supporting us and participate with us in taking things forward. Thank you very much. Now I would like to pass over to Sergei Ostrovsky from Ashurst International Law Firm.

- **(Sergei Ostrovsky)** Thank you, John. Good morning, everyone. I am Sergey Ostrovsky. I am a partner at Ashurst. I lead a team dealing with the Commonwealth of Independent States, CIS countries. We are delighted to see all of you here и добрый день тем, кто сегодня в Бишкеке, hello to those who are in Bishkek. I am delighted to see you too. I am amazed the way technology is working. We are very happy. It does not happen every time but has happened today. I am pleased about that. Ashurst, although we do not have office in Bishkek, over the years I have travelled around Central Asia and I think it is important to have events like this ... to host events like this where there is a number of different disciplines come together: the academia, the business, consultants. Because, particularly in Central Asia, the infrastructure projects, the future development projects, they will and do involve, as you know better than I do, a number of these players and constituencies. Lawyers, of course, play some part in this as well, providing a structure to these things, hopefully. I wish you a very successful day today. I hope you enjoy it. There will be a bit of drinks and some buffet lunch for those who are in London and I imagine there will be something for those who in Bishkek although it is not going to be provided by Ashurst. It will be provided by somebody else. Thank you again for coming and I hope we will stay in touch and Ashurst will become a friend of the



20 years of Kyrgyz- German relations

new Kyrgyzstan Foundation and to those of you who are working in the region. So thank you very much and I will pass it back to Sally. Thank you.

- **(Sally Cummings)** Thank you very much Sergei. I wonder if we can just launch with the four speakers. Balihar and I are going to be chairing this session and I will kick off with presenting the first speaker. I am delighted to present Elmira Satybaldieva.
- **(Maxim Ryabkov)** Sally.
- **(Sally Cummings)** Oh, sorry. Hello Maxim.
- **(Maxim Ryabkov)** You forgot about me.
- **(Sally Cummings)** I am so sorry. Of course, Maxim is first. Thank you.
- **(Maxim Ryabkov)** I would like to thank everyone who has contributed to this event. Thank you very much for the room provided by American University of Central Asia. I think it was a wonderful gift to us. I also would like to thank Friedrich Ebert Foundation for providing financial support for this event. Peer Teschendorf, who is the representative of Friedrich Ebert Foundation in Central Asia, will say a few words.
- **(Peer Teschendorf)** I have seen our sign and we are a co-partner on this and we are quite happy to do this. Ebert Foundation is a German democracy supporter. We work in over 100 places. I am happy for this event because we came quite under fire regarding aid effectiveness. You might remember the first time the real discussion came up. This was Rwanda case, state heavily aid funded. After the catastrophe, everyone was asking why no one really realised what happened. This had a deep effect on Germany as well and us as the state funded organisation. I hope what we are doing is going to be more effective and that is why it is quite interesting to talk again and again over this and see where we are standing right now. Many thanks



20 years of Kyrgyz- German relations

that everyone is here and that you are willing to discuss with us and many thanks for OSCE Academy to initiate all these.

- **(Maxim Ryabkov)** Because I will be speaking a bit later I will stop now and pass it back to you Sally.
- **(Sally Cummings)** Thank you very much Maxim, thank you. We start, if we may, now with Elmira Satybaldieva, who is an EUCAM researcher at the Karelian Institute in Finland. She is a research fellow and has several interests including politics and development and state-society relations. She has completed her doctoral thesis a while ago now on Southern Kyrgyzstan at the School of Politics and International Relations at the University of Kent. She will be speaking on an academic prospective on conflict prevention in the Kyrgyz-Tajik borderlands. We asked everyone to limit their talk to 10 minutes. Thank you very much, Elmira.
- **(Elmira Satybaldieva)** Thank you very much, Sally. Today I will focus on donor conflict prevention in Tajik – Kyrgyz borderlands. Some of the things I will say are probably not new and have been first raised by Chad Thompson and John Heathershaw on their paper “Discourses of danger in Central Asia”. What I will do, I will probably focus on the implications of donor conflict prevention in this border region.

The border regions of Fergana Valley in Central Asia have been largely framed as prone to violent conflicts. A set of external and internal factors, usually unexplained by their correlations and interdependencies, have been consistently listed to present the region in need of conflict prevention intervention. In this talk, I will problematise the conflation of donors’ desire for security and economic development needs in the Kyrgyz-Tajik border region. This talk will not provide a full assessment of various projects running in this border region but will highlight two key issues drawing



20 years of Kyrgyz- German relations

upon my fieldwork carried out in Batken and Israfa districts in the fall of 2011 and summer 2012.

Issue 1: How framing conflict threats through western security lenses distorts reality on the ground. The Kyrgyz-Tajik border region has largely been perceived through western security lenses, which accentuate transnational threats like terrorism, organized crime, human and drug trafficking, environmental degradation and the implications of the situation in Afghanistan. But this framing downplays internal conflict factors such as poverty, class inequality, weak state capacity and undemarcated borders. The securitisation of conflict risks in the region can misidentify the causal factors for the conflicts as well as failing to make connections between the different factors. For example, in the recent Saferworld Report (2011) on conflict prevention in Fergana Valley, poverty is not recognized as a significant factor that generates tensions in the border region. Although it might be difficult to establish a direct link, the everyday experiences of poverty are an underlying condition that shapes grievances in the region, especially in Batken, which is the poorest province in Kyrgyzstan. Furthermore, poverty needs to be better understood and conceptualized as a class inequality, which would shed more light into the dynamics of conflicts and the potential of certain groups, such as the poor rural and urban class, to undertake violence. Strangely, the Saferworld Report states that it lacks evidence to link security threats (such as drugs and extremism) to conflicts but nevertheless identifies them as important largely because security experts do so.

The security discourse tends to use recent events, such as the 2010 Osh conflict, as an evidence of the region's 'explosiveness', and in particular, to identify ethnicity as a driver of conflicts. But ethno-nationalist sentiments are an outcome of a complex situation partly shaped by economic and political factors that have not been resolved and piled up for the last 20 years or so. The discourse on the securitisation of conflict



20 years of Kyrgyz- German relations

in the border region illustrates how the West's domestic security concerns dominate local economic development needs.

Issue 2: Conflict prevention intervention, technical solutions, and loss of legitimacy. On the ground it becomes very apparent that donors' priorities and local needs do not match. In Batken and Isfara districts, local actors stressed the need for real economic development that would help to increase employment and production and to reduce poverty. But since 1998, various international organizations have largely provided conflict mitigation trainings, early warning systems and improvement of social relations and local infrastructure. In this border region, conflict prevention projects override development needs. Furthermore, technical assistance is used for conflict prevention, and its effectiveness is questionable. Inter-ethnic communal participation in various activities, usually cultural events such as Nooruz celebrations as well as other activities such as football games, joint *subbotniks*, and workshops on conflict prevention, is a key mechanism to reduce conflict potential as if inter-ethnic non-participation is the root cause of the social problems. As many local experts noted, this form of technical assistance has proved to be unsustainable. After 15 years of conflict prevention intervention in the Tajik-Kyrgyz border region, local actors have become well aware that international donors cannot tackle structural problems because of ideological and financial constraints. Local village residents and authorities are unapologetically cynical about the track record of 15 years of conflict prevention. Their general attitude is well summarized by an *aksakal* in Aksai, who said 'It's better not to disturb people and to pretend like they can help us. It's better not to give us false hope.' Than notion of false hope was raise over and over again.

To conclude, Central Asia is not a priority for most international actors and it is unlikely to receive substantial development aid. In light of this, international



20 years of Kyrgyz- German relations

agencies on the ground acknowledge that there needs to be a better targeting of development towards agriculture, which involves de-secularisation of development and a better use of meagre funds for the region. International actors also need to learn to recognize actual security threats in the region and to be responsive to local needs. For instance, in Batken, some donors such as the Finnish Ministry of Foreign Affairs are beginning to change their focus towards improving economic production and developing local markets and cross-border trade though such changes are limited and belated. Thank you.

- **(Sally Cummings)** Thank you very much, Elmira. I will hand over to Balihar for the next presentation.
- **(Balihar Sanghera)** Thank you, Sally, and welcome Bishkek. I would like to introduce Nick Megoran, who did his PhD in Cambridge, and now is lecturer at the University of Newcastle. His main interests include nation building, international boundary issues in Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan, geopolitical issues in the region and, as he told me yesterday, he is now looking at the recent US-UK foreign policy. He completed a British Academy Mid-Career Fellowship studying responses to violence in Southern Kyrgyzstan in June 2010. His talk is on critical reform responses in post conflict Kyrgyzstan.
- **(Nick Megoran)** Thank you, Balihar. Good morning, everyone. Salam Aleikum, Bishkek. Thank you, Sally and John and Sergei and Maxim.

My argument is this. Kyrgyz historical trajectories of nation building and national identity are marked by a profound sense of insecurity about the future of Kyrgyzstan. This explains to a significant degree mistrust of Uzbeks and also the policies of mayor of Osh - Melis Myrzakhmatov. However, foreign organisations, who work on political reform and political proposals in Kyrgyzstan, have not understood this and, as a result, some of the interventions they have made and



20 years of Kyrgyz- German relations

suggestions and proposals they have made are actually counterproductive and have the potential to make the situation in Osh worse.

Nation building, national identity, nationalism have been misunderstood by foreign analysts. It should not be understood as inherently in its negative forms. It is rather an ambiguous ideology that can divide and exclude but can also bring together. It has historically been inseparable from the rise of modern democracy and the welfare state. It is a doctrine that a nation should have its own territory and this territorial nation state should in some way reflect the character of the nation. It is the ideology of the world divided into nation states that independent Kyrgyzstan was born into in 1991. Nationalism, nation building for the time being are an inescapable framework for politics in Kyrgyzstan as it is for politics in Uzbekistan or Kazakhstan or Britain or the United States or virtually any country on the earth. The challenge, therefore, is not how can nationalism in Kyrgyzstan be overcome but how can the Kyrgyz nation building become more inclusive. I suggest that historical trajectory of Kyrgyz nationalism is marked by a profound sense of insecurity about the very survival of the country in the future. Politicians and news commentators in the country regularly talk about the threats for Kyrgyzstan as they see that Kyrgyzstan's future is endangered by the weak state of the Kyrgyz language, by internal social divisions, which people call tribalism or North-South distinctions, and by geopolitical threats from China, from the United States and from powerful neighbours such as Uzbekistan. I suggest that historical imagination sees classical political Kyrgyz forms drive from nomadic past as the solution to these challenges: The solution being unity and concordance, *биримдик*, *ынтымак* (using Kyrgyz words). Classically understood, when different tribes of the nation were united behind the charismatic leader, with Manas held as an example. In 2011 presidential elections Atambaev's repeated sound bite was “*Болунбогуло*” - do not divide among yourselves and his



20 years of Kyrgyz- German relations

rival Tashiev's "Эл болунбойт, жер сатылбайт" - the nation will not be divided, the land will not be sold.

This understanding of Kyrgyz nation building as insecure and threatened is significant for the future of inter communal relations in Osh. Because, according to this vision, Uzbek or at least their elites are seen to represent a threat to the state. This is because that they are perceived not to be investing to the project on national unity - "Биримдик" by primarily using Uzbek not Kyrgyz for their daily life communication, for music and television and by seemingly to be aligned to external powers, particularly Uzbekistan. It is a widespread belief in Kyrgyzstan that certain Uzbek leaders want to or have wanted autonomy for Osh or have wanted to join Osh and Jalalabad to Uzbekistan. Newspaper articles and politicians regularly interpreted the questions about the formal state of Uzbek language, Uzbek signs, or music and shops even wearing the hijab as a step towards secession. There is not a shred of evidence for this in the past 20 years in Kyrgyzstan. Not a piece of evidence, but it is widely believed and it is believed because of this background of the sense that Kyrgyzstan is insecure and threatened. This understanding of Kyrgyz nation building or nationalism as inherently insecure and threatened also explains the policies of the city's mayor, Osh's mayor Melis Myrzakhmatov. There are two particular characteristics of his policies in Osh.

The first is promoting tolerance. He declared 2011 as the year of tolerance. A lot of projects were running in Osh which encouraged and rewarded learning of Kyrgyz songs and language and sport and cultural traditions and instilling a patriotic spirit in the youth.

The second area of his policies that has attracted attentions are the symbolic policies. One of his major response to the violence of 2010 has been the use of symbols to create civic allegiances among all the ethnic groups in Osh to the idea that the city is



20 years of Kyrgyz- German relations

a Kyrgyz city and it is firmly and securely part of the Kyrgyz Republic. He has made a new flag for the city, a new anthem for the city, and he put statues of warrior leaders around the city, who are considered important figures in modern narratives of Kyrgyz national history: Barsbek, Alymbek, Manas. This is interpreted by outsiders, and I will come to this in a moment, as a dangerous anti-minority nationalism. But in its own logic, by uniting all the different ethnic groups around a leader of the state, peace between the different groups and the future of the city will be preserved.

By and large, I argue, the international community and here I am talking about organisations like International Crisis Group, Amnesty International, and OSCE have failed to understand the trajectory of the Kyrgyz nation building as threatened. They failed to understand the responses from the city's mayor. This led to two problematic assumptions by these foreign organisations.

First, they misdiagnosed nationalism as an isolated streak of extremism in Osh that could be contained by concerted actions from Bishkek. The International Crisis Group's report this year, Kyrgyzstan's widening ethnic division in the South, is typical. It blames the Kyrgyz in Osh on the anti Uzbek policies of the city's mayor, whom they call an ardent nationalist. The report writes with bewilderment how young people, the educated, could support him when they should have been expected to take a liberal position. This whole report is an indication of a failure to grasp the wider appeal and importance of Kyrgyz national building as a force in the country. As a result, the report suggests the removal or marginalisation of Melis Myrzakhmatov by Bishkek with support from foreign donors. A similar failure to grasp the historical trajectory of Kyrgyz nation building pervade other international actors. So the Kyrgyzstan Enquiry Commission's second headline report says that the country's name should be changed from the Kyrgyz Republic to the Republic of



20 years of Kyrgyz- German relations

Kyrgyzstan because they say this was more responsive to the civic basis of nation building. This was condescending and arrogant as if an outsider could tell a country what it should call itself. This also betrayed a belief that the problems of nationalism are limited and could be dealt with by superficial gestures. This proposal was ceased on by the Kyrgyz media as evidence that outsiders, the foreigners, are hostile to Kyrgyzstan and are trying to break Kyrgyzstan up. It stoked up the nationalist feeling that it meant to try to challenge.

The second problematic assumption of international donors that results in their misunderstanding of processes of Kyrgyz nationhood is advocacy of civic reintegration. It is assumed that it is feasible and possible for the government to reintegrate Uzbeks as citizens of an inclusive state. So Amnesty International, for example, recommended that appointments to the legal system should be ethnically balanced. The International Crisis Group recommends that the appointment or reappointment of qualified Uzbeks to positions in local government, civic administration, police and education. These goals are modelled on positive discrimination and experiences elsewhere. They do not suit contemporary Kyrgyzstan. In the first place, they do not take into account how patronage networks work, not only in getting jobs but also in advancement and promotion. If a headline government policy appoints lots of minorities in institutions, what about their future when promotion and advancement is dependant to a substantial degree on networks and connections? Combined with prejudices, this will work against Uzbeks. As a prominent Uzbek's human rights activist in Osh said to me, it is not simply a matter of recruiting, when people are mistreated, when their career paths are closed off and they are forced to do all kinds of minimal tasks and not given a responsibility they should be, this will just lead to a real problem.



20 years of Kyrgyz- German relations

Even if the issue is reduced to a political participation, that is also dangerous. These reports advocate more involvement of Uzbek politicians in the political process. However, the violence in 2010 was precipitated in part by the ill judged attempts of Jalalabad MP Kadyrjan Baturov to participate more fully in Kyrgyzstan's political life. The backlash against him was intense but also many Uzbeks in Osh and Jalalabad were very alarmed for this activist's stands. Given this history, efforts to encourage the equal participation of Uzbek minorities in the political life of the country formally could be equally counterproductive. As one Uzbek politician in Jalalabad put it to me, Baturov chose the wrong time to raise the issue of Uzbek civil and language rights. Kyrgyzstan was poor, it had two revolutions, it was unstable. When the country is developed, richer and at peace, only then we can raise these issues. I suggest that the Uzbeks in Osh have a strategy of keeping their heads down and attempting to re-establish daily life in their own spaces in the city with an eye on a long term. This is a different strategy from that which foreign organisations would urge them to do.

To conclude, these foreign programmes and reports I have been discussing have an aim at the peaceful promotion of ethnic relations to enable the long term maintenance of a thriving Uzbek minority in Osh and of good relations between all groups, I support that, of course. However, by failing to understand the trajectory of Kyrgyz nation building, these policies misdiagnose the problem and propose the solutions that are either unrealistic or potentially counterproductive and dangerous. The Israeli geographer, Oren Yiftachel, who works on Bedouins in Israel, argues that Israel is an ethnocratic regime. It presents itself as a democracy but its main project is the promotion of the social, economic, and political life of the country for Jewish identity. Under such conditions, he says, minorities do not focus on the struggle for full participation in the state but in creating conditions for the survival of their group in the long term, rather than emigrating, until such a time when they can seek full



20 years of Kyrgyz- German relations

civic rights. The current trajectory of Kyrgyz nation building and the conditions of Uzbeks in Osh, I argue, is similar. The patronage structures of Kyrgyz society, the trajectory of nation building means that equal participation in a multi-ethnic state is not possible for Uzbeks for the time being. The goal of inclusive national identity needs to be kept alive and the critics of injustices needs to be maintained, that is important. But in the meantime, international organisations need to find other ways of supporting Uzbeks and of promoting good relations between Uzbeks and Kyrgyz. If not, they risk fuelling Kyrgyz fears that the West is trying to break up Kyrgyzstan by supporting separatist minorities. They risk fuelling a backlash against the people they are trying to help. International organisations need to remember that the Uzbek minority will not be safe in Kyrgyzstan until the Kyrgyz themselves feel that the Kyrgyzstan is safe.

- **(Sally Cummings)** Thank you very much indeed Nick. We move now to one of the first graduates of the OSCE Academy will be speaking now, Matthew Naumann, who graduated from the OSCE Academy back in 2005 and for the past nine years have been working on Kyrgyzstan, particularly on social issues. Very recently he has specialised on UN activities, giving consultancy on social development, children's rights and disaster preparedness. He will be reflecting today on the UN peace building responses to the 2010 events. Thank you, Matthew.
- **(Matthew Naumann)** Hello, everybody and thank you, everybody for this event. Well done for organising it. I am going to review my experience. Like Sally said I have been working for a few years with the UN. I was in the *Resident Coordinator's* office in Bishkek when the Osh events happened and for a few months afterwards. I would like to say a little bit on my own personal perspectives. First of all, I will give an overview of what the UN did in the response and secondly, may be touch on a few lessons learned from the response.



20 years of Kyrgyz- German relations

As you probably know, the UN has a global mandate to maintain international peace and security among many other things. It also has a global role to be a coordinator of humanitarian response in crisis. The UN is made up of a lot of different actors with very different mandates. There are about 17 United Nations organisations working in Kyrgyzstan, for example. We can probably divide the response to the Bishkek and Osh events in 2010 by the UN into four different areas: political, humanitarian, development, and then peace building components. While these overlap with each other significantly, it may be helpful to divide these up by category.

In the key element of the UN's political response to both the April and the June events, the Secretary General's Special Representative, working with counterparts from the OSCE and the EU, was active in the country working with key stakeholders to ease tensions, prevent further conflict and reach consensus over the future development of the country.

The humanitarian response was undertaken in the context of a Flash Appeal of the international community. It saw the provision of shelter, food and healthcare supplies, support for affected children to overcome barriers to return to school, and protection measures to monitor human rights concerns, and address gender-based violence, child protection, and housing, land and property rights, among others.

The development response included significant support for efforts to restore a legal framework through support for the formulation of new laws promoting good governance and parliamentary democracy, and for a constitutional referendum and elections and the bodies responsible for these. It also included public works programmes after both the April and the June violence intended to provide victims the funds they needed to restart their lives, begin reconstruction of essential public infrastructure and, in effect, to divert young people away from being drawn into crime or violence.



20 years of Kyrgyz- German relations

All of these activities began within the first few weeks after the April and/or June events. However, the UN also recognised a need for specific support for peace building and conflict prevention activities, which had been absent from the previous UN programming which had overwhelmingly focussed on development concerns. In this context, the UN in Kyrgyzstan applied twice for a total of \$10 million from the UN Peace Building Fund for support for a range of projects that sought to address the particular needs and facilitate the peace building capacity of national and local government, women, young people, members of agricultural communities, the mass media, and the victims of human rights violations, among others. In addition to the activities supported under the Peace Building Fund, the UN also supported the Ministry of Education to develop peace education materials, implemented a multimedia campaign “For Tolerance” in Kyrgyzstan, and established and trained a group of local mediators to resolve conflicts in the country.

There are various opinions about the effectiveness of the response as a whole, and an overall impact analysis would be very challenging. However, there are a number of lessons from the response and the context that the United Nations organisations are seeking to address going forwards.

First, as can be seen above, the peace building activities were intended to address the needs of a wide range of stakeholders. In this context, and given time constraints, and the lack of experience of staff members in the UN in Kyrgyzstan on peace building and conflict prevention programming, the projects ended up often having local impact rather than a cumulative impact on a wider scale. In order to try to address this institutional weakness, the UN has incorporated peace, governance and human rights as the first of the three pillars of its Development Assistance Framework, and has been working to improve its conflict awareness and conflict strategy.



20 years of Kyrgyz- German relations

Second, in a situation where hostilities have emerged between communities, decisions on a response will always have political implications. In fact, the humanitarian response in particular (but also elements of the peace building response) was criticised by Kyrgyz for providing more direct assistance for Uzbeks and therefore being biased; by Uzbeks for the significant support to remote communities who they felt did not suffer to nearly the same extent in the violence; and by northerners who felt that many of the problems being addressed in the south were just as acute in the north. This final north/south point was partly driven by donor desire to concentrate on the south. In this type of context, the need for a needs-based response is critical, and effective means to communicate this to all national and international partners is even more important.

Meanwhile, the UN is aware that many of the underlying causes of the violence are structural problems, from poverty and lack of employment opportunities, to issues of governance and the rule of law. Given the current susceptibility of the country's economy to shocks, and the current limited government human and financial capacity, it is clear that improving UN responses in these areas are essential to ensure greater stability in the future.

This is, of course, my personal opinion, I do not represent anybody here. I think that is all I wanted to say. Thank you.

- **(Sally Cummings)** Thank you very much, Matthew. Back to Balihar.
- **(Balihar Sanghera)** Thank you, Matthew. Finally, we have got Babken Babajanian who did his PhD at LSE, then he taught there for several years and then he moved to Manila where he was a Development Specialist for the Asian Development Bank. Now he came back to London where he is now with the Overseas Development Institute working there, again, as a Development Specialist at the position of a Research Fellow. His research interests include social protection systems,



20 years of Kyrgyz- German relations

international and comparative dimensions of social policy, social exclusion and community driven projects. In fact, he has done some really interesting work around community development and was published quite widely on that. Thank you.

- **(Babken Babajanian)** Thank you very much, Balihar. What I would like to talk about is the extent of donor support and nature of donor support for capacity building in Kyrgyzstan in the social sector. Why is this important? I try to link it with the issue of security, conflict, and violence. The ability and capacity of the state to ensure basic level of well-being and to provide services and social protection is extremely important for achieving social cohesion. In other words, it is important for minimising inequality, inequities and ensuring that the existing differences in the society do not actually translate into a social tension, into a conflict, into instability and do not threaten the stability in the society. It is also important for building a state-society contract. In other words, the ability of the state to provide basic services and provide them in a transparent and accountable way is important for generating the trust of citizens in the state and creating this notion that they are supported by the government, which, in turn, will lead for citizens to support their government and also in that sense would prevent any social tension and instability. These issues are obviously very topical for Kyrgyzstan that has witnessed two painful regime changes and violence in the south in 2010. In order to talk about this, I would like to focus on two examples.

One example is the efforts of the donors to activate, what I call, the alternative methods of services delivered at the local level. Second, is the support of donors for the government in the health sector.

In terms of the first topic, as you all know, donors have been extremely active in supporting, financing and providing technical assistance to, in the civic sphere, to community groups, to non-governmental organisations. This has been going on since



20 years of Kyrgyz- German relations

the mid-1990s. On one hand, donors would support NGOs. On the other hand, they would support local informal groups, community groups. We have huge projects like ARIS that has been extremely critical in supporting local groups to mobilise around specific social issues that are of their concern. At the same time, the government has launched a massive decentralisation reform which has also opened up spaces for local groups to participate.

There has been criticism of the donor involvement in the NGO sector, in the community based development. Many critics think that donors have produced, in many ways, opportunistic groups that would follow donor agendas. Some of them would not promote the issues that are important for the local people but rather pick up the issues that are advanced by foreign donors. Perhaps this is correct to some extent but it does not affect all NGOs.

Another criticism is that by activating citizens, by ensuring the notion that citizens should be responsible for contributing to the local welfare, this model has created..., it dumped the responsibility on the citizens and removed the notion that the state should be responsible for providing a certain level of services to the population. It could be true to an extent but what I would like to do is to focus on the positive outcomes of these and what I think is positive is, from a purely practical point of view,.... this has helped to fill in the gap that has been left by the state due to its weak capacity after the break down of the Soviet Union and allowed these groups to cater for the welfare of the citizens and improve the situation in many ways. Another important aspect, the institutional aspect of this, is the creation of the civic space of the civic sphere. I do not mean just a political, I am mostly concerned about the social sector and the idea that the citizen groups can actually form alternative modes of service delivery and they can participate and complement the state. I think this is important from the institutional point of view because it stresses the importance of



20 years of Kyrgyz- German relations

plurality of different actors involved in service delivery, as long as it is not taken to the extreme where it is all left to the local groups to accomplish. I think, in a more aggregate sense, this involvement of activating NGOs and the local space has been really productive and important by creating a very healthy civic sphere. I think that Kyrgyzstan is one of the most advanced countries in the CIS in this regard.

My second example is more a macro level support to the state in the health sector reforms. Two massive programmes Manas and Manas Talimi that have been supported by the World Health Organisation, the World Bank and some other donors between 1996 and 2010. It has been massive. In a way they restructured a health sector completely. They introduced a primary healthcare, mandatory health insurance, introduced free family GP services and co-payments in the hospital care. Again, there is still room for improvement, of course, especially when it comes to the quality of healthcare and there are also indications that informal payments still continue. However, let us focus on the positive. Some of the positive effects include the following. For example, these reforms have ensured that most people in the Kyrgyz Republic have a physical and financial access to health. If you look at the data, the proportion of people who reported that they could not attend the health centre because they did not have money to pay or it was too far away has decreased. It fell from 11% in 2003 to 3% in 2009. It is a massive indicator. People can access healthcare. Secondly, it reduces a financial burden on people. The proportion of out of pocket payments that the poor, especially in the lowest quintiles, would spend on healthcare has decreased massively. Strangely, the reform has also reduced informal payments in healthcare, which I think is absolutely fundamental. As I said, the informal payments still persist but the scale of them has gone down dramatically because the system has introduced transparency and much more equitable access to health services. What are the lessons from these? One lesson is that a country like Kyrgyzstan with a very limited resource base can actually consolidate effort and



20 years of Kyrgyz- German relations

undertake a reform that is extremely significant and it can do it in a very systematic and coherent way, which to me, is an absolutely massive achievement. If you look at the role of donors, donors have been extremely important for catalysing the reform, for providing technical assistance, for teaching how to go about these things. Actually, the donors have not been fundamental in terms of the initiative. It was the government that was willing and was committed to undertake reform. It is that commitment and ownership that have created and helped to build the capacity and, in its turn, will affect the relationship with the state. I think it is important to focus also on a positive aspect that an institutional aspect in Kyrgyzstan is actually moving forward and, I think, at some point, it will have a cumulative effect and help us to deal with social issues and also deal with other issues such as political stability and ethnic relations. Thank you.

- **(Sally Cummings)** Thank you very much, indeed. Thank you to all the speakers for very thought provoking presentations. I wonder if we could open this up to a wider audience for comments and discussions and, of course, in Bishkek. Before I do that I wonder if panel sitting here around the tables can quickly and briefly present themselves, say who you are and what are you doing. John, I wonder if you could kick off.
- **(John Schoeberlein)** Thank you. I am John Schoeberlein. I am teaching at Nazarbaev University in Kazakhstan and I am close to this topic and I have been on both sides, analysing from an academic point of view and also trying to do practical assistance working with International Crisis Groups some years ago. Thank you.
- **(Jacqueline Hale)** Hello. I am Jacqueline Hale. I am based in Brussels with the Open Society Foundation, very much on an empirical side of all this. Working mainly in an analytical capacity towards the EU. So I am more on the analysis side than the donor side but happy to discuss both elements.



20 years of Kyrgyz- German relations

- **(Alan Parfitt)**. I am Alan Parfitt. I am a lead Analyst on Central Asia at the Foreign Commonwealth Office here in London.
- **(Tim Epkenhans)** Hello. I am Tim Epkenhans, I am teaching in the University of Freiburg in Germany and connected to this topic by having worked for OSCE and German Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan for couple of years.
- **(Siddharth Saxena)** I am Siddharth Saxena from the University of Cambridge. I run the Central Asia Forum there. Of course, we are interested in all the topics discussed here but our close focus has been on trying to understand these issues from the perspective of the local government and local institutions and how they are thinking answers to the same questions from their very specific conditions and understanding the global discuss on this. Thanks.
- **(Gulzat Botoeva)** I am Gulzat Botoeva. I am doing a Phd and finishing in January from Essex University. My research is on notions and activations of the hidden economy, drug control strategies in Kyrgyzstan.
- **(Gül Berna Özcan)** Hello. I am Gül Berna Özcan from the School of Management from the University of London. I am interested in capitalist markets development and entrepreneurship in Central Asia. I carried out fieldwork in Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan. I am also interested in the impact of aid on enterprise development, in particular, looking at the aid dependant economies in Kyrgyzstan. I worked with a team of UNDP experts on exclusion and business model. We also published a report on how inclusive business models create opportunities for Europe and Central Asia in 2011.
- **(David Lewis)** Thank you very much. I am David Lewis. I teach at the University of Bradford. My particular interest is in the politics of international involvement in Kyrgyzstan and also the range of security systems that are also taking place in the



20 years of Kyrgyz- German relations

last few years. I also worked at one point for the International Crisis Group in Central Asia until 2005.

- **(Kanykey Jailobaeva)** Hi. I am Kanykey Jailobaeva. I teach at the University of Edinburgh and I also do freelance consultancy work for international organisations in Central Asia. I defended my PhD thesis in 2011 and it focused on donors' approach to promoting civil society in Kyrgyzstan. Thank you.
- **(Sally Cummings)** Thank you very much. I wonder if we can first ask Bishkek if they had any immediate questions for speakers or anything that you wanted to immediately follow up on?
- **(Maxim Ryabkov)** Thank you, Sally. It was very interesting. I would like to ask Nick, if possible, to explain in a more detail. How do you see specifically the actions of the international community? How can international community make sure that the negative nationalism goes away? Apart from, perhaps. massively ensuring the security for people; on a smaller scale, how can we make sure that the extremes of nationalism are not taking over in the political life of the country?
- **(Nick Megoran)** Thank you. It is a good question. I think that the first thing to say is that the international actors should ask what harm they are doing. It seems that every report that foreign organisations write includes recommendations “Kyrgyz government should do this..., Kyrgyz government should do that..., Mayor should do this and that...”. It strikes me that it is a colonial and arrogant attitude. Why not simply analyse, present understandings and say what you think you could do. That is the first thing I would say.

The second thing I would say is this. As Elmira has underlined, there are structural problems in Kyrgyzstan due to poverty. The potential for violence and extreme nationalism will be reduced if poverty can be reduced. But still the ideas are



20 years of Kyrgyz- German relations

important. We know that.... My argument that I am focusing on this, that the historical trajectory of Kyrgyz nation building has come to a point where Kyrgyzstan feels threatened, extremely threatened in a way that you do not find in neighbouring countries. This is what, to a significant degree, explains how apparently reasonable requests, such as an idea that Uzbek should be considered as a formal language and could be used for official business in part of the country...apparently a reasonable request should lead to the assumption that this is really a secret plot to break up the country. This assumption is widespread. I interviewed a senior official in Kyrgyzstani NGO. His work attracted millions of dollars of aid from around the world for this organisation's work on tolerance. This person told me privately "I think the Uzbek politicians are really trying to destroy our country". This view is pervasive. So, I think what needs to be done in the long run, as well as reducing poverty etc., it is trying to reduce the sense of insecurity that is widely felt in Kyrgyzstan. Because, as I argued, Uzbeks will not be safe in Kyrgyzstan until Kyrgyz feel that Kyrgyzstan is safe. There are ways that the international community can help with this. The first is that they can help resolve ongoing border issues with Uzbekistan. When full delimitation of the boundaries is enacted then there will be less causes to believe that Uzbekistan is trying to destroy Kyrgyzstan. Another issue is that foreign organisations can help the Uzbeks in Kyrgyzstan learn Kyrgyz and operate in Kyrgyz better. At present, we have a system inherited from the Soviet Union where minorities receive education primarily in their own language. This worked in the Soviet Union. People in Kyrgyzstan, who studied in Uzbek, could go to Uzbekistan for university or for work. They cannot do that now. Children, who graduate from Uzbek school, in Kyrgyzstan are often not able to find employment in Kyrgyzstan because they cannot speak Kyrgyz well. They cannot go to Uzbekistan using the language they got and their Russian is often poor. Rather than defending an outmoded system of preserving education in the individual languages, outsiders



20 years of Kyrgyz- German relations

could help the Kyrgyz government in Uzbek schools with progressive teachers and pedagogues. Uzbeks in Osh will also voice this opinion. They could help Uzbek schools shift towards more bi-lingual education, for example. There is a range of things that foreigners could do but the central point I am making it is they must aim at helping Kyrgyz state feel more secure.

- **(Sally Cummings)** Thank you very much, Nick. A number of very important issues raised in your answer touching on how one presents ideas on aid to the recipients. The ideas that poverty reduction are of paramount importance. And I think, very importantly, some ideas are related to your central thesis that we should focus on making the state and the Kyrgyz state feel safer. Can I ask a response for some of the comments that Nick has made? Montu please.
- **(Siddharth Saxena)** Actually Nick and I talk sometimes and there is some reason in what he is saying. But I would raise slightly broader point related to that. There is often disconnection between using the words 'governance' and 'government' and how they come together or not come together. This point is to address an issue that, when we have been looking at the aid and at donor community, many important things have been outlined which they are doing. However, they still tend to create a service community for themselves. What we have is a large service community, in fact, two or three generations of Kyrgyz are stuck in that mode; that is, taking away those people, who could be the agents of, not change, but stability in the country through provision of services. Simple things like doctors, engineers, bridge builders and other technical or technocratic institutions which have basically slipped away from underneath the discussion of civil society building and grand ideas of peace building and so on. We have a lot of people without that capacity. The state capacity depends on that, plus all other issues that were discussed. What are we doing to do that? The international aid community is completely missing the point because they



20 years of Kyrgyz- German relations

are largely driven by the prospective of peace building or other important yet sort of side issues, I would say, in overall development of the country. This is building intrinsic instability into how the country works. If you take away that capacity, you are never going to get out of it. You can take an academic discussion on that: how the idea of Silk Road as a platform through which things pass is. The notion of production in Central Asia from the state is also missing that. So this course runs around.

And a final point that I would like to make is that these capacities go into the notion of danger which Nick was talking about. Danger in many ways. For example, many of the things we have discussed can be fixed, can be mended in simple ways. Take something that is extremely important. I am not talking about Islamic terrorism or financial crisis, I am talking about simple things like earthquakes which strike the region, which definitely will. There are no ifs, they are going to happen. What is the capacity, how are we engaging internationally with these issues? This can decimate the whole system all together. And all issues we talked about can get enhanced in a moment to a level which is unsustainable.

- **(Gül Berna Özcan)** I would like to address a couple of issues in relation to security and aid. I looked at the impact of the aid on the enterprise world and there emerges a complex picture. It is not entirely a fault of organisations that things do not go as predicted or planned. It is often the gap between receivers and givers and different way of thinking and doing things. For example, in terms of their interests and moral imperatives, in terms of transformational mission, in terms of agents interests. I observe a huge difference between the recipients and the donors that creates a notion of free riding because Kyrgyz recipients did know that aid frameworks actually did not fit their plans or expectations but went along with those programmes because it was providing income, it was providing additional activities



20 years of Kyrgyz- German relations

for different stakeholders, the government, entrepreneurs and aid workers. I think that there is a more complex phenomenon that has to do with the failure of givers' notion and the takers' understanding of the phenomenon. In terms of security, I think that it is important that, of course, Kyrgyz should feel secure but this is a relative concept, some even very strong states do not feel secure. I think going with the ethnic path of ethnocratic build-up might be extremely dangerous. I can give you examples around the world, it just does not work. Thank you.

- **(John Schoeberlein)** I would like to respond to some of the issues that came up, especially in Nick's presentation. There was a point about arrogance and the ways of speaking about those issues are very much to the point, such things like suggesting the names of the country, even if that is a good idea, you just cannot do such things. I think there is a problem with readings and intentions here. When international organisations offer their recommendations, which are framed as recommendations, they are not framed as dictates. They can be read as dictates and it can sound a very arrogant for an international organisation to say, "you should do such and such...", when the intention is more of a, "you should consider such and such...". I do not know if there is any way to recalibrate the language in order to make these better understood.

The next part, Nick's point about nationalism as basically being a fact of life in Kyrgyzstan, that is certainly so, although I do not think that we should treat nationalism as a unified singular phenomenon. There are many forms that nationalism can take. The fact that it is a fact of life does not mean that it should be above critic, that it should not be on the agenda for a Kyrgyz society to consider what forms of nationalism are harmful for the country and which are beneficial. Although those discussions really need to come from within the Kyrgyzstan society, they can not be seen as being dictated from or directed from outside. They are an important



20 years of Kyrgyz- German relations

part of the discussion. If we are reinforcing the position of particularly dangerous nationalist leaders, who incite violence for example, by saying that we recognise nationalism as a fact of life, in that sense, we can be inflicting harm as well, that will be undermining one position in the discussion and supporting the other one.

I think there is also a danger in our conversation here of potentially talking past each other. There are probably three different sides to this discussion, one of which is not represented. The Kyrgyz nationalist leadership position, nobody is here to represent them, but there are people who represent both the aid side and academic side. In several presentations that we had, for example Nick's critic, was not particularly addressed in the aid side presentations. In a sense, I think it is a problem of presentation, what you can do in 10 minutes. But it is also a problem of how we think about these things. I just like to keep things brief. I would like to focus on a couple of points on Nick's comments. He said we should not harm, we should recognise that international actors can do harm as well. It is certainly true but that does not constitute the reason not to do anything at all in the risk of doing harm. He said that we should not give false hope. But does any kind of action represent a false hope? Then it becomes a rational for not doing anything. I think that we should instead focus on being very attentive to the concern of people like Nick raised; then try to do something useful and recognise that there can be some harm but we should also be very careful about the problem of arrogance.

Very specifically Nick mentioned the problem of recruitment. Here we are finally talking about concrete things that international actors do. Supporting recruitment. Nick's critique was that this is not enough. That also does not constitute a reason not to do it, it just means that we need to go further and follow through and see where else the system is not working. If recruitment is insufficient then what more do we need to do.



20 years of Kyrgyz- German relations

On the point of education in Uzbek, Nick designated that this is an outmoded policy from the Soviet times supporting Uzbek language education. Of course, one view of Kyrgyzstan society is that you could have multiple languages of education and inclusion and some Uzbek leaders advocated for more possibilities for inclusion of Uzbek in the politic of Kyrgyzstan. Of course, this goes straight against the kind of nationalism that you have highlighted as a problem. But does that mean that outside actors should say “ok, nationalism is a fact of life” or can we still advocate for more inclusive kind of politics in Kyrgyzstan? That does not mean that people should not learn Kyrgyz, that is very crucial for the development of Uzbeks in the region but ultimately these choices should be down to the people themselves. If the Kyrgyz education system is offering Uzbek language education to Uzbeks and they choose that over the Kyrgyz education then it is our role to say you have made a wrong choice. I think that our role should be in raising issues that could be important and contribute something to the discussion but not to dictate what position should be taken. Thank you.

- **(Sally Cummings)** Thank you very much, John. We will give Nick a turn to reply.
- **(Maxim Ryabkov)** Sally, There are few questions from our side, if we may. Philipp Reichmuth from GIZ.
- **(Philipp Reichmuth)** My question is back to what Nick was saying about the problem with the advocacy and civic reintegration and a dysfunctional nature of affirmative actions and recommendations in this direction. I would tend to agree with that. The problem that we, as international organisations, donors, implementers and so on face when we work with nation building is that we have a Kyrgyz state whose capacity at strategy development is decreasing. Capacity of formulating a common vision for Kyrgyzstan is not increasing, let us put it that way. The last common vision we had in Kyrgyzstan was the vision put forward by Akaev. At the



20 years of Kyrgyz- German relations

moment, we have competing models what Kyrgyzstan is going to be like. But there is no united state vision where it wants to go. This, on the one hand, is not helping to address problem that many Kyrgyz feel that their state is being threatened and it also gives very much space for local leaders with their own interpretations on various points and radicalism scale, let us put it that way, to put forward their vision of Kyrgyzstan as something representative. Myrzakmatov is, I think, one good example for that. This being so, what kind of recommendation would you give to international organisations if they would want to engage on the support of this process - the nation building in a meaningful way and/or should they do so at all, given this situation?

- **(Maxim Ryabkov)** There is also a question from David Gullette, University of Central Asia and Violetta Yan from UN Women.
- **(David Gullette)** My question is probably directed to Matthew as well as to all of the panellists. In the development context, do you think that there is a fundamental communication problem, not necessarily between international organisations itself and government, people but even within the organisation? I ask that, because in 2010 when we tried to do a conflict sensitivity study and Azamat is here, he can say this as well, we could not do it. Because it was too much conflict and everyone was too sensitive. The problem was also, when we were talking to our partners, they had lots of ideas, they were expressing a lot of anger, they were expressing empathy, they were expressing all sorts of ideas. They had ideas of particular development challenges in the areas that were being affected, but these ideas were not passed up. At the same time, we had an issue where particular development humanitarian frameworks were being imposed, mainly because of funding requirements, or because in a way in which they worked in the past, or because of what had been a best practice elsewhere with being imposed in a context here. But the views of those



20 years of Kyrgyz- German relations

in the organisation were not listed or not being heard, or not being voiced and posing different views in a different method of development. I am just wondering if any of you could speak on that.

- **(Maxim Ryabkov)** On more question from our side.
- **(Violetta Yan)** Thank you. I will be quick. My question is about Babken's presentation. We were a little bit sceptical about his opinion on the successful delivery of public services in Kyrgyzstan. What services was he referring to in his presentation and what were the criteria that civil sector has used in Kyrgyzstan to actually select those beneficiaries of those services? Why does he think that is sustainable? As UN women, we are looking at the modalities of how public services could be provided sufficiently and so on on the ground. Could he please elaborate more and tell us why it is sustainable and successful in Kyrgyzstan? Thank you.
- **(Sally Cummings)** Thank you very much. Jacqueline.
- **(Jacqueline Hale)** My question is going to Elmira and also to Nick. Elmira mentioned that we should desecuritise development and Nick you gave a recommendation that Uzbeks should lie low and that one of the problems in Osh is the attempt by Batyrov to claim the rights of participation in the political process. I just want to push you both a little bit further on this. Because I feel like we are missing a socio-economic analysis of what happened in Osh. There were a lot of problems there relating to and feeling that Uzbek minority held a lot of the businesses and were in fact in a sense, even when they were staying out of politics and performing largely in socio-economic life, they still were not secure and Kyrgyz still were not feeling secure. I wonder if this analysis that somehow Uzbeks should lie low again in a way disproved that we had a conflict anyway. Coming back to the notion of desecuritisation and development, can we really, practically do that in a post conflict enforcement with all the scars and all the legacy of the conflict?



20 years of Kyrgyz- German relations

I just want to point out in this context one quite concrete area that we have not spoken about yet. We talked about social services, but what about the services of law and order? We talked a little bit about the recruitment and one of the key recommendations of international donor community, organisations such as ours, International Crisis Group, has been to recruit to bring the minorities into law and order now. I can take the criticism and see the problems that could develop, but cannot we also recognise that there are patronage networks already working within law and order, the same patronage networks that we highlighted here already operating within the law and order system? My question is, how then we do work to break that down and to make sure that a sense of security is for all Kyrgyz, whether they are ethnic Kyrgyz or Uzbek, because that has been a clear driver of the conflict. Thank you.

- **(Sally Cummings)** Than you very much and concluding our session, can I ask all of you to response to those issues of the complexities of action and non-action, the challenges of weak state capacity and lack of vision. The UN issues, the ideas are not travelling upwards. Response to Violetta's point about services in the Kyrgyz Republic not being functioning and asking what services were referred to, how civil society is judged. Finally, Jacqueline's point that we have challenges here of desecuritisation versus development and reflected in the law and order issues but also whether idea of Uzbeks lying low, I think she was referring to Nick's presentation, is a correct response. Matthew, can I ask you to respond first on the UN points?
- **(Matthew Nauman)** Ok. I will try to reply specifically to the questions about the UN, although I need to stress that I am not a UN staff member, I just help them sometimes. With regards to this issue, the fundamental communication problems that David raised, I think that it is perfectly valid. There are particular issues in the



20 years of Kyrgyz- German relations

UN, just like in NGOs that interventions tend to be very much donor driven. So UN can do work even if they are not given the money to do it. It has some of its own resources but most of its workers are funded by bilateral donors or sometimes multilateral donors as well, sometimes internal funds within the UN, but they also could be with some specific conditions. Generally, a lot of work that the UN does is reactive to the donor interests and the donor desires. Because of that it can be difficult to focus, as much as it should do, on these assessments on the local level. They can be too much of a focus on what the donors want to do, for example fund spending on the south of Kyrgyzstan after 2010 events. I think there are lots of good people working in the UN, like they are working with the NGOs and so on, and the bilateral organisations in Kyrgyzstan, and I think there are lots of clever people who do understand the situation and do genuinely want to make a difference. It is sort of hit and miss, I suppose. To some extent, there is a community based focus in some programmes to other extents there is this top-down approach. I would like to mention UNICEF work in 2011. There was a pilot project in Batken district. I would like to highlight one of the successes that they had. They were working for Aiyl Okmoty in Batken district across a range of services, on health, education, social protection and so on. One of the issues they discovered was that in half of the seventeen villages they were working in, people were getting the social benefits that they were entitled to easily. And the other half of the villages, these are benefits for families living in poverty, they were only getting these benefits if they paid about a year's worth benefit first of all to a person in the Aiyl Okmoty administration, in the village administration. Based on these findings, UNICEF went back to the Ministry of Social Development to explain the situation and the problem was right down to the rayon level authority and aiyl Okmotys' and measures were taken to ensure that people did get their benefits without having to pay bribes. I think that this kind of feedback mechanism between the local village levels and national levels is important



20 years of Kyrgyz- German relations

and it has been lacking quite a lot in the international policy making where people either focus on the community level work without looking at the policy level, or the other way around, they were working at a policy level without seeing the actual impact on communities. These sorts of feedback mechanisms are important and should be developed.

The other point I wanted to talk to was this idea of international organisations taking staff members away from service delivery. I also think that this is a fair point. I know that there are lots of people who could be doing a good job with the local or national government, who work with the international organisations. There are a couple of things that I would like to say to this. One is, I think across several, not only UN organisations, across several donor organisations and NGOs there has been an increasing focus in recent years on building capacity of local government and do the things that they need to do, to improve the conditions in their own areas. Of course, it is up to the people in these areas, once they have skills, whether they are going to stay on their jobs and whether they are going to use them to find a better job somewhere else. People cannot be forced to stay where they are. There has been a particular problem in terms of water and sanitation. People get trained to run the water supply system in a village and then they find out that they can get twenty times as much for doing the same job in a city, in Bishkek, for example. One other thing. If international organisations were not there, I think there is no guarantee that these people would be doing these jobs anyway. People know that teacher can earn much more working in a bazar than teaching, also sweeping roads in Moscow. Who is to say that if international organisations were not there, people would not be doing these jobs anyway? That is all. Thank you.

- **(Elmira Satybaldieva)** Ok. I will also comment on the fundamental communication problem. I definitely agree with that. But I would probably add that it is mostly



20 years of Kyrgyz- German relations

down to the fact that a lot of international actors are unwilling to listen. I think that it would make quite a lot of difference if they would listen to local actors for a change rather than coming with their position that they know everything and all local suggestions fall through the blue print that they have. Now, in my recent field trip, I noticed that there is that fatigue of foreign expertise. Atambaev recently commissioned the National Strategic Institute to develop the country development strategy just to Kyrgyz experts, excluding all these ADB, World Bank and IMF based experts because they are tired of it. They really want a home grown strategy. We need to understand why there is this fatigue. It is probably because after listening to all this advice for the past twenty years a lot of things are not working out. Probably, it is fair to say that people who live there actually know the answers and know what is going on. It is quite important to listen to their experiences rather than coming and telling them to do this and that.

On desecuritisation. I mainly focused on Batken and Isfara districts, I did not talk about Osh really. It looks to me, especially after even these few visits to these border regions that international organisations are chasing ghosts in this region. There is no evidence that the security issues that they raise are actually there and they directly link to conflicts. There is no evidence there on what basis they are proposing all these conflict prevention programmes. For the past fifteen years they did not work or there is a very limited effect. There is a need to do self scrutiny. Why is there little attempt to go back to the projects that have been going on for decades now and do that kind of assessment? Is not what most organisations do and figure out what works and what does not work? Over and over, this is raised pretty much in all of the interviews. They scream at this point “We do not need this conflict prevention intervention, what we need is to feed our families, help us build processing factories, help us build storage facilities, help us improve cross-border trade”. These are the priorities and on what basis are we ignoring those calls? If security concerns on the



20 years of Kyrgyz- German relations

ground translate into the projects, they materialise in these projects that are dubious in their effectiveness, then yes, I think we should de-securitise development in the region. Thank you.

- **(Nick Megoran)** Thank you for your comments here in London and in Bishkek. I seem to be cast as a nationalist baddy here. I would say that I have a report on this coming out through Chatten House in two weeks which goes into these questions in detail. To start, I am not a fan of nationalism. I sometimes say to people in Osh, Osh is not a Kyrgyz land and it is not an Uzbek land, its God land. But nationalism is the context in which we work. John asked me about these. By nationalism I mean the idea that the world is divided into 200 countries each with the capital city and a nation. If this was not the main concern, you and I would be in the same country because you would not have a revolution. And Sally, in three years time, you might come here as a foreign guest with the newly independent Scotland. Nationalism is the game in town. The question is, how do we make it work in a way that is more inclusive. It is significant that we had violence in 2010 but not in any other period of the independence. During the period of Akaev's presidency he encouraged a more inclusive form of Kyrgyz national identity, that Kyrgyzstan is our common home. In the 1990s and near the 2000s many Uzbeks would say to me in Osh "Thank God we live in Kyrgyzstan, not in Uzbekistan. Because in Kyrgyzstan we have freedom and we can make money and Uzbekistan is just we would be oppressed". This changed with Bakiev, whose politics were more notably less inclusive. Ultimately, the future of ethnic groups in Kyrgyzstan is not in the hand of foreigners. It is in the hands of local visionaries. This is why I would have hoped, in small groups I have seen, religious groups, among Muslims, Christian believers in Uzbek and Kyrgyz in Osh who are able to envisage the sense of nationhood that goes beyond Kyrgyz and Uzbek. I would stress that nationalism can be progressive. The idea that everyone in the nation is equal is the basis of the modern welfare state. Only under nationalism



20 years of Kyrgyz- German relations

you can have a president of America who was a son of a happily married flower seller in Arkansas and an alcoholic garage mechanic. In Britain we had a prime minister, Margaret Thatcher, who was a daughter of a provincial green grosser. Before the age of nationalism it was monarchs and kings who ruled. So nationalism can be progressive, it is how we make it progressive. In the meantime, my report, which I have mentioned, will talk about suggestions. Foreign organisations can work on the principals of reducing their harm. They can listen. They can try to think about how the Kyrgyz national identity is insecure. Yes, there are other countries that they feel themselves insecure but I argue that Kyrgyzstan is in particularly form of insecurity. The article on wearing a hijab in Uzbek school in Kyrgyzstan four years ago finished by saying “We think that the aim is to create a Halifat and break up Kyrgyzstan”. This is not a common way of thinking about security of your state. Kyrgyz intellectuals often discuss whether their country has any future or if it is going to be destroyed. We have to understand that context. Foreign organisations have to understand and need to work within it. One thing they can do is stop working in Russian and switch to working in Kyrgyz. I would say the same for foreign academics. The idea that Kyrgyzstan is threatened because only elite cannot speak Kyrgyz is pervasive. We can help Kyrgyzstan switch to be primarily a Kyrgyz speaking country. Finally, I would note that we are hosted by lawyers. I think that lawyers possibly, as they are in legal profession that is outside, can really help. The violence occurred in 2010, but it did not occur in other times because of the political disorder. The overthrow of Bakiev. Bakiev was overthrown to the significant degree because of the perspective that he was corrupt. This corruption was facilitated and enabled by Britain and America. The supply of fuel to the Manas base. The ability to siphon off a huge amount of sums through banks. Global Witness wrote a report about this. Often this money ends up in off-shore bank accounts that are channelled through the British financial system and through the American financial system. The



20 years of Kyrgyz- German relations

best way we can help is by reducing corruption, by putting our own house in order. May be the International Crisis Group should change its name to the British and American Crisis Group and focus its energies on trying to do something that would genuinely make a difference for the long term stability in Central Asia.

- **(Sally Cummings)** Thank you, Nick.
- **(Babken Babajanian)** I will just respond to Violetta's question. Thank you very much. Just to clarify, I was not referring to the effectiveness of the NGO activity, what I suggested that there has been a change in the institution model of service delivery. In other words the state does not hold the monopoly over the provision of the goods and services. Citizens can get into groups and co-produce together with the state. That is the point that I was mentioning and that is the significant change that I see that was produced by the donor involvement. An example of how citizens can be involved in this in Kyrgyzstan is ARIS, which is a huge programme at a national scale that has funded thousands of citizens' groups in the delivery of services and infrastructure across the whole country to the unprecedented scale and significance. Because it really reinforced the notion that people at the very local level, at the aiyl level, can get together and put up a proposal for a repairing a local canal or renovating a school and they actually can get money for that and they themselves can manage the whole process of the design and implementation. Moreover, what I supported is the participation of the local communities in developing local community plans for priority services and infrastructure. Obviously, we still need to see if this kind of initiatives can be sustainable in the long run. You know that this has been going for the last ten years and that is the major achievement that we need to recognise.
- **(Sally Cummings)** Thank you very much, indeed. Thank you for all your comments. I think we will have a coffee break now. Can I also urge you if you have any



20 years of Kyrgyz- German relations

comments to keep them for later? Maxim, are you happy for us to go at 11:30 our time, 5:30 your time for the coffee break and then we can resume with you?

- **(Maxim Ryabkov)** Yes. We can have coffee break and we can come back in 20 minutes.
 - **(Sally Cummings)** Fantastic, thank you very much.
-



20 years of Kyrgyz- German relations

Continues after coffee break

- (Sally Cummings) Is Maxim there? I cannot really see them there.
- (Maxim Ryabkov) I am here. Hello.
- (Sally Cummings) Fantastic. I will hand it over to you, if I may, to start your side.
- (Maxim Ryabkov) Thank you very much. I suggest we start. We have three speakers from our side. First, it will be me, then Dariha Erketaeva from Danich Church Aid and instead of Jonathan Hornbrook will be Philipp Reichmuth from GIZ. We will share with you our short impressions from what we observed in Kyrgyzstan, I think, at least from my side. I will change what I was going to say to respond to the discussion that took place.

I should say that first of all, if we are talking about the conflict that the insecurity is the only game in town, that the insecurity is the driving force ... if you look at how conflict is structured, it is structured very much along the interests ... the interests of elites, of the state structure, of non state structures. In this sense, if we talk about how aid influences conflict, positively or negatively, I think we should look at how aid influences the state and whether indeed, and here I will be pessimistic rather than optimistic, whether indeed the aid can reshape a state, in particular the Kyrgyz state. I have my own first-hand experience with the Kyrgyz state not exactly as a Kyrgyz citizen because I am not a Kyrgyz citizen. But I had an interaction with the Kyrgyz state. They do not give an impression of insecurity on their side. They are often very secure in their position. They are capable of working on their own agenda, which is usually not an agenda of international donors, for example, and this is absolutely normal. People have their own interests. It is simply the expectation that, here in



20 years of Kyrgyz- German relations

Kyrgyzstan, we will have a different agenda than people who come from Kyrgyzstan, in particular with regard to conflict. Not because there are different theories of conflict, on which we all may agree, but because there are different interests that state structures, donors, NGOs have. Different interests, different incentives. The incentives themselves may not necessarily be directly related to conflict but they are part of the conflict eventually. Because you can earn money in being involved in the conflict, roughly like this.

One issue that we have not raised and I think we have to raise at some point, which was discussed about other countries, is to what extent we can use conditionality with the aid, to what extent aid can be conditioned on certain performance by the state first of all, as the state is my focus now. I think that, at the moment, conditionality of aid is going to be not effective. May be it was different in the 1990s, may be we could have done it differently but as far as I can see it now, we have a very limited space for conditioning aid on the state performing a certain new role and so on. And in this sense, I am not talking about colonial ideas of what state should do or what a donor should do but rather about conditionality as an attempt to link aid and better governance. In fact, what I could observe was the other way around, we had a recipient conditionality. We had a conditionality imposed by the state structures on the donors to continue development aid. I think that this situation is developing in a certain context in which the Kyrgyz state had become less donor dependent than it used to be, and I am not talking only about the government, I am talking about the whole state and para-state structures including, of course, the local government, which we were talking about, particularly, in regard to the south.

First of all, we have alternative donors, those who do not share the agenda of liberal reform and so on. They are Russia, China, Kazakhstan, India, Turkey. Now we have much more migrant remittance dependency rather than aid dependency, which



20 years of Kyrgyz- German relations

means dependence on Russia. Migrants are a very important tool. This geopolitical shift is also very important if we talk about how western donor community, here people mostly represent western donor community, how it can really influence the situation.

Also I am not sure that from a political prospective, from a prospective of a western donor, there is so much to be gained from getting too much involved in the local politics in the Fergana Valley. The situation there is, of course, very complex and dramatic but there is a certain invisibility of the conflict in Kyrgyzstan if we take it to the international level. It is a largely invisible conflict. The gain from allocating more resources to it and thinking of it may not necessarily be forthcoming.

The last point, the conditionality of aid or increasing the level of conditionality will most likely affect the population at large rather than those elites that this conditionality should more immediately affect. If we want to link the aid and conflict management, we need conditionality but, at the same time, in this context, here in Kyrgyzstan, we have very limited opportunities for doing so for a number of reasons.

There is one additional factor here, that is being discussed probably throughout the development community, is that, in the development community, there is a very vague notion of what it means for a project to fail. We avoid that language, we avoid it. Largely, when we evaluate projects we might not necessarily often be ready to acknowledge that project had problems because of the misperformance or other problems with whatever parties were involved, in particular the state. We do not have a project management level definition of what it means or what to do when a project fails if it is the recipients' fault. We do not have that within our project management structures or to the lesser extent, probably, than we wanted to have. I think that this is something that could have been changed in order to be more clear



20 years of Kyrgyz- German relations

about the causal links with definitions on what fails and what does not fail and more important why. Is it the failure of an implementing organisation, is it a failure of a state that is supposed to provide conditions in which this occurs? The state capacity here, of course, is important. But again when we talk about state capacity, it is another controversial point. There is a lack of capacity but there is also a different agenda of a state, different from international donors'. I think what we sometimes call a low capacity is, in fact, simply a different agenda, simply different interests in achieving the result. In this sense, I probably, fully agree with Nick on that simply putting forward the idea of imitating someone else's political structure and expecting that this is going to be welcomed, this is going to be received very well is not a good idea. I do not think it is a good idea. I do not think it works but what I disagree with Nick on, is what is the source of this. I think, it is less the emotions, I think it is more or less interest based calculations, if we talk about the state. If we talk about vulnerable groups and communities and on this level, then I suppose, we have a little bit different picture. But as far as the elite level and state level are concerned, I think that their interests should be analysed and taken into account. That is all that I wanted to say.

Now, as a moderator, I would like to give the floor to Dariha.

- **(Dariha Erketaeva)** Hello everyone. Very pleased to be here, speaking to academics and few of us are practitioners and I hope I could give some interesting information and thoughts to you.

I work at Danish Church Aid, Copenhagen based organisation. I work as a coordinator of a peace building programme that is implemented in the south of Kyrgyzstan. Just like Matthew, I would like to speak about my views working in the area of humanitarian aid and development and I will be speaking on what I do in my everyday life at work. DCA and other international NGOs traditionally do not



20 years of Kyrgyz- German relations

implement humanitarian programmes. This was before June 2010 events and after as well. The June events required very quick response from the side of the projects and NGOs who have been already working in the country. Very quickly we started to get emergency funds to be able to quickly respond directly and indirectly to the affected population. For example, at DCA we received some emergency funds from Danish Government. Normally they will not give us this kind of funds but due to the violence and a number of casualties we were given these funds. With no experience in humanitarian projects, we had to quickly develop our actions and quickly respond to the needs of the population. This was also typical for other local NGOs and intentional NGOs. Nevertheless, there were some humanitarian organisations who quickly launched their programmes, very quickly appeared in the south, like Norwegian refugee council, Danish refugee council, Doctors without borders, ICRC. They very quickly launched a number of programmes. UNHCR and many other UN agencies as well. They all started to work on their quick impact programmes. Nevertheless, these humanitarian projects had faced all sorts of challenges. I will name them briefly.

First ones were related to coordination among and within local NGOs, international NGOs, donor agencies and the government. At all four levels and within themselves at each level, the information exchange, communication, and coordination were very limited and, mostly at times, even impossible. It took some time for the UN agencies to open up their coordination office and make local and international NGOs the purpose of this coordination agency. They were so called UN cluster meetings, let us say, on sanitation and hygiene, food, shelter, protection and so on. This kind of cluster coordination meetings started to take place in English only up until very late 2010. Local NGOs at the very beginning would start in a very exiting manner to participate but not always would understand what the communication or meeting was about. The NGOs capacity to communicate and exchange their information was



20 years of Kyrgyz- German relations

very low. Experienced staff at the local NGOs, who spoke English and who knew how to communicate information, they quickly moved to working on the UN and international organisation projects, of course, for better salaries. This coordination projects lasted quite long pretty much until the end of the humanitarian phase.

The other problem was right after the June events. In June, the green light corridor for transfer of humanitarian items, food and non-food items that were brought from Bishkek to Osh, the green light was not open. In the massive chaotic information sharing and coordination, the government and international organisations forgot about secure and protected transport or corridor for transfer of items from Bishkek to Osh. It took weeks for international organisations to start discussing this and start doing a joint common advocacy letter to the government asking for a safe corridor. For the government, it took weeks to provide this. Lots of times, the humanitarian items that were transferred from Bishkek, they were looted in between, it was not safe for the staff. First attempts were nearly impossible, if not failed.

The other thing was, there were dozens of programmes that appeared very quickly saying that they were humanitarian programmes but were struggling to meet international humanitarian standards. Many programmes could not identify the needs of the people and, in an accountable way, deliver those items in the response to the needs of the population. Local NGOs and lots of international NGOs did not have any experience of implementing projects and following the accountability standards. There were guidelines but there was no time to start learning them, to start implementing them.

Lastly, there was a very shallow and short-sighted assessment of the conflict roots. Many humanitarian programmes said that conflict roots were ethnic, that Uzbeks need to be protected. This created even more conflicts, wrong understandings and so on.



20 years of Kyrgyz- German relations

In the end, the humanitarian phase ended in the mid of 2011. Somehow the primary needs of the affected population were met, sometimes may be not met. Some of the voices were heard, some of them were not. Those humanitarian organisations that popped up after the June events, they left or downsized their offices. Those ones that stay here, being local NGOs and some of the international organisations ... I can name them ACTED, Safe the Children, HELVETAS, Mercy Corps and some others. They started gathering and coordinating more after one year of working together. Local NGOs, as a consequence of the June events ... programmes that they implemented, they found that they created so called regional humanitarian forum which now connects more than 25 local NGOs. Similarly to the UN cluster systems, they created their own clusters. Local NGOs under this forum, Regional Humanitarian Forum, now have clusters on protection, food, human rights, and so on. This is a lesson learned and, hopefully, something that was gained and, hopefully, something that will continue and capacity can be built in that area. And this already existing Regional Humanitarian Forum can be a platform of information resources and coordination if necessary. On the other side, international NGOs created so called TASK alliance. This is an alliance of close to ten international NGOs that are working in the country. Some of them have been working for more than ten years, some for five years but they are working here for a long term and they will continue working here. In 2011 TASK was approached by the UN, one of the major donors here in Kyrgyzstan and Central Asia to design a programme that would address the post conflict needs. International NGOs agreed to offer this and designed a five million budget programme for 8 months. This programme is implemented by the TASK members and some of the regional humanitarian forum members. In total, 16 members are part of this programme now that has been implemented for a year. Some of our colleagues were speaking about donors imposing some of the rules. Here we faced one of the rules. This programme was funded by the EU, Instruments



20 years of Kyrgyz- German relations

for Stability programme. The nature of the programme is so that the activities have to take place in the post conflict environment. How much ever we wanted to work in Talas, Issyk-Kul or Narun, we cannot do any activities there. We can only work in Osh and Jalalabad and we were lucky enough to include Batken to our programme. More than five million Euro programme for 18 months is being implemented in the south only.

Lessons learned from the previous conflict prevention programmes and previous humanitarian phase have been incorporated into the design of the multi-partner programme and it has a holistic approach to the conflict roots that we identified. Identifying and mapping socio-economic problems in the south. Second area is strengthening local capacity for trust building, resilience and conflict prevention which include psychosocial support, mediation activities and legal aid. The third and very large component is, in a way to what Elmira was saying, social-economic development: creation of job opportunities, support to local economies, rehabilitation of social infrastructure and so on. The programme was designed in half a year in 2011 and very key principals such as local ownership, conflict sensitivity by developing and applying certain set criteria for beneficiaries and target areas, local participation and what Matthew mentioned earlier feedback mechanisms or complaint mechanisms. These sorts of principals are being applied. They are required by the programme to be incorporated into the implementation.

We talked quite a lot about ethnic dimension. This programme considers ethnic dimension as a modernising factor. We consider that ethnicity is not generally a root cause of conflicts but socio-economic problems and some others that are causing conflicts in the communities. We have conducted a very large household survey trying to understand perceptions of local communities on what the real roots of the conflict are. More than one thousand seven hundred households in the south had



20 years of Kyrgyz- German relations

been surveyed in order to help us to identify where we should work and what we should be doing when we are implementing socio-economic activities.

Nick was talking about interviewing long existing organisation here in Kyrgyzstan, with multimillion projects, that they have being working on building tolerance and so on. I would appreciate if academia would work and interview not only so called prominent NGOs that appear most of the time on the media but also projects that are not always visible but working at the community level and addressing more community needs that are identified by themselves.

Some other areas that were also discussed. I go quite a lot to the communities in the south and I see some of the ARIS projects. I could see some of the wasted funds, wasted resources. For example, there is a *bania* built in one of the communities in Batken. There is no water. It was built in 2008 and there is no use. There are many such examples where local communities were not asked what they need and they, just one time, came, built and went away. I would also like add that some of the projects, some of the local or international NGOs who are working here in the country, they had different trends, different approaches in the early 1990s, in the early 2000s. They were improved but still different approaches starting from the late 2000s, they are using different approaches trying to include community voices, local owners, representativeness into there programmes.

Also, very briefly I would like to say about some projects like SaferWorld, Search for Common Ground and so on, who are working in a long term perspective here trying to change perceptions, attitudes, behaviour in local communities. Unfortunately, they are very time consuming, resource consuming projects. It is not easy to change it very quickly and hard to see the results in a rapid manner. Nevertheless, as complementary to some projects like ours, there are such, so called, soft activities that are being conducted.



20 years of Kyrgyz- German relations

At last, this is the first time I am talking to academia apart from some interviews with Baliyar, Emil, presentations at the OSCE academy. I am very happy to forward some of our reports, communication, advocacy reports through Maxim to those who are interested.

- **(Maxim Ryabkov)** OK. Thank you very much.
- **(Philipp Reichmuth)** I see it is necessary to introduce myself and organisation that I work for. I am Philipp Reichmuth. I work for GIZ, German Intentional Cooperation here in Bishkek. I am in a double position because, on the one hand, I am working for one of those evil organisations that have become under artillery for the last two and a half hours. My background is in research. I am in Islamic studies and social history of Central Asia originally and may be vindicated by that. The other this is that, some of you mentioned that, areas that should be supported by international agencies are, for example, economic development or international trade or education or health and this happens to be exactly the areas that we are working on. So may be that is not quite all that bad.

I will do it in such a way that I will give you a short glimpse of what is happening behind the curtains, what processes went at GIZ in reaction to the security crisis in 2010. Then I will be moving straight to a set of five lessons learned, which are again evilly worded as recommendations, but those are recommendations to the donor community so that is ok, I hope.

So what happened in 2010, when we started to react to this security crisis, is that we basically had a situation which changed very rapidly and forced us, at the first step, to re-align our existing programmes in a broad direction to take the emergence of the conflict into the account. The first step in this was starting short term measures within existing projects that we had. For example, after June 2010, that meant that in our existing educational classes we would integrate elements of conflict sensitivity.



20 years of Kyrgyz- German relations

Within our health programmes, we would start activities on ethnic sensitivity, on conflict prevention as part of a broader programme for lifestyle choices for youth, for example. As part of an existing economic development programme, we would work closely with affected households. Basically fairly minor adaptations. The thing with GIZ projects is that they take very long to come into being. They take at least nine months in practice. It was even longer over the months for internal reasons. So we had quite some time to restore the measures and start reflecting and consolidating our approach, reflecting on such questions as what we have been doing in the short term, where we are strong at, what we have been doing in this country and what other questions that we need to ask ourselves if we want to address this in the medium term in the meaningful way. We were lucky in a way because we had these long processes, because this allowed us to avoid the problem with the river of gold that began to descend upon the southern Kyrgyzstan in late 2010 and mid 2011. Basically we missed most of that. We have been starting new projects and new phases of existing projects only now in the beginning of 2012. Some are starting right now. And there, for example, in the planning phases we were talking about conflict sensitivity and security a lot, but now when those projects start to function, it seems that this is not a meaningful way where GIZ can see itself as engaging in the local context. Instead we are focusing more on things like good governance, for example. So we have a shift from a conflict prevention aspect towards something that increases and supports the functioning of institutions at the local level: those government institutions and non-government actors.

If I jump into what we had learned over the last two years from working in Kyrgyzstan but also aligning our own work to what happened in Kyrgyzstan. I would say we have five main lessons.



20 years of Kyrgyz- German relations

The first is that donor organisations should take more seriously the aspect of Kyrgyzstan as a fragile state. Because we still see that a lot of aid is based on the assumption that the state is well equipped to develop strategies, where it wants to go, how it wants to work with international actors but also where it wants to see itself and what policies are going to be like. In practice, we see that this is in many places no longer the case, unfortunately. In a way, at the moment, Kyrgyzstan is going a bit backwards. We see that the capacity of the Kyrgyz state to fulfil some basic functions, just as provision of some basic services and infrastructure at the local level also strategic planning by a large degree, is decreasing. I will give you a short example. We have a project in the water sector. It was discovered that between 2007 and 2011 the revenue from water, from the use of infrastructure had been decreasing by 75%. It did not mean that people were using less water, only that the state became less effective at collecting fees and, may be, people were not paying them in the first place. There was a meeting scheduled with donor representatives and representatives of the Ministry and this question was asked. The answer was very interesting. Basically, the answer was that “We would like to collect these fees in different ways or even may be raise them in some places where it is necessary but we cannot really do that because there would be a revolution and so we need more donor support in this particular area”. What we see is basically a case of aid: a) the state is ceasing to function in this particular area slowly and slowly, b) there is a certain effect of blackmail that donors are being asked to complement some functions that the state basically should be capable of providing for itself and revolution is simply used as a threat because everybody had seen that it is a real threat. Basically, we should stop assuming that Kyrgyzstan is a state whose institutions are functioning everywhere, especially when we are working with the outside areas or conflict affected areas. Instead we should work more on the lines of principles such as 'do no harm'. We should work on supporting institutions that can provide services



20 years of Kyrgyz- German relations

at the local level in ways that are transparent and accountable and, at the same time, we should work on supporting the professionalism of those institutions that we know that do work. Because we see that the state needs this kind of support at the moment.

The second lesson is that donor organisations and implementers should take their time. We should take our time and work towards this professionalisation. There is a dividend for being around for a long time and keep doing the same thing effectively even though the things are crumbling around you. The good experience of that is, for example, the OSCE programme on working with the Kyrgyz riot police. This started in 2005 or 2006 and worked on professionalisation of the riot police, the de-escalation strategies, professional behaviour of the officers and so on. We can see now that this programme has been actually quite good in terms of achieving some of its goals. Examples have been visible since 2007, for example, when six weeks ago someone, Kamchibek Tashiev, tried to storm the parliament. There was some violence on the street but it was remarkably non-violent. When you look at the videos, you see that the riot police is functioning well. You could also see that the April 2010 revolution could have been much bloodier if the riot police were more eager to let themselves to be provoked. Of course, there was a moral dilemma in 2008 or in 2009 to support Bakiev's riot police. There are some moral questions that might be asked but again the riot police will be used to suppress riots one way or the other and it is better to do it in a non-escalating way. Either way, we see that there is a dividend to sticking, to doing these things in a limited area but doing it for a long time, be patient and keep working on the professionalism of this particular target groups you are working with.

The third recommendation, that is very short, is that we should take donor coordination more seriously: coordination between donors, which is who we are



20 years of Kyrgyz- German relations

supporting and how. This is pretty difficult because all donors have their own interests in implementing projects and there is an implementation logic here. At the same time, there is a logic of supporting one government towards some common goals. Many donors actually signed agreements to that end. It can be pretty tedious because it means a lot of time spent sitting on meetings, passing things, investing heavily into processes and in the end discovering that in the end everybody does what they what anyway. Nevertheless, it could be enormously fruitful for the efficiency of aid. In Kyrgyzstan, this is not going as well as, for example in Tajikistan. We have competing institutions in donor coordination and so on. The south is a good example where, in 2010, it would be good and very useful to have donor coordination functioning better than it did. It did function to some extent but there was still a symptom of stepping on each other's feet. For example, when we evaluated a youth project, which has now started, we were told by some of our Kyrgyz partners "I know that the Ministry is asking you to go to the south but please do not do it, go to Naryn and Issyk-Kul" because nobody is working there any more and in Jalalabad and Osh people are stepping on their feet. Basically, donor coordination in this case was done for us by our partners, which is nice, but it is something that aid providers should do among themselves.

The fourth lesson, which is probably the most important one, is that we should work more at the local level and leave our own comfort zone of sitting in Bishkek and supporting central state institutions. Instead we should move out and work on the local level and take conditions seriously. Kyrgyzstan is a country where this can work very well because we have a tradition of de-centralisation that goes back to Akaev, to the late 1990s. This makes Kyrgyzstan where working locally can be done much more easily than in Uzbekistan, where I was working for several years as a researcher before. This also means that when we leave our comfort zone, we should also leave the comfort zone of our business processes. We should become more eager



20 years of Kyrgyz- German relations

to try inductive approaches: go to the field and see what the problems actually are, assess the needs, develop solutions from there instead of sitting at the desk in Berlin, in London, or in Washington, develop solutions by taking something with the ready made blueprint from Chad or Bolivia and implementing it in Kyrgyzstan. Of course, I am exaggerating. Nobody is doing that seriously but still we see a lot of projects applied here where a basic concept does not originate from the assessment of the needs at the local level in the Kyrgyz villages. I think that it would be more useful to have this kind of approach. This also allows us to address the problems at the source exactly by strengthening local institutions to deal with them. This will enable us to support local solutions to problems and, in particular, problems of decreasing capacity of the central state. This requires certain commitment, certain amount of patience; this requires certain tolerance for ambiguity because, when you start a project, you may not know what you are going to do. It also requires us to relinquish to the idea of introducing large fundamental changes to everything at once. When you come as a donor and you have five million Euros to spend on something, there is a certain temptation to raise big expectations and claim that this project will change the reality of the functioning of the Kyrgyz state in certain ways. This expectation, which we should not raise, also as a matter of honesty in front of our target group. Simply because people will actually see whether we have achieved this or not. If I look back at what GIZ has been doing, the projects that are still being talked about at the local level are precisely those that have been working locally with local partners, supporting local institutions. I have experience with a project in Batken where the project was stopped almost five years ago but people still talk about it and ask us if we can continue them. This is exactly what we need. This, in a way, tells us how we should work if we want our work to be effective. At the moment, we are starting a project on the development of projects with local civil society, which is a bit like a playground for this kind of inductive approach: going out, starting from a needs



20 years of Kyrgyz- German relations

assessment, taking a long time. We have, I think, nine months before we actually have to implement anything. This allows us to fine-tune things to the needs that are actually there on the ground.

The fifth lesson is that we, as donors and implementing agencies, should intensify our cooperation with science and researchers. There is a certain tendency among international organisations to make assumptions about certain realities on the ground that are actually not well studied as we would like them to be. It would make sense to open ourselves to the open nature of certain questions and take a more investigative approach. I will give you two examples. One is a discussion on brain drain in Kyrgyzstan, about young Kyrgyz being qualified, studying here, learning English and so on and then going away and never coming back. I do not know if this is taking place to the extent that people claim it is. May be people are coming back. We just had not time to watch at what they do when they come back. May be they came back in different capacities and not very visible. We do not know that it is an open question and something that warrants research. As an open question, this is not something that one can base decisions on. Another example is the question of local religion communities. There is a strong presence in a donor discourse about the dangers of islamisation and, at the same time, a discourse of not really understanding of what local Islamic communities really are and what they are about. That is something that we should engage and do research and dialogue with the scientific community. Because in this case local Islamic communities can be very significant, regarding development, provision, professional mobility, professional social services and so on, except that we do not know really much about them and how well this can be mobilised. This also means that we should engage in the local research community or the Central Asian research community, monitoring, evaluation, and eventually design of our development projects. We should seek an active dialogue with the local scientific community in the form of dialogue platforms and so on. At



20 years of Kyrgyz- German relations

the same time, we should seek more contact with western experts on Central Asia. This is something that is happening to some extent. From my own time as a researcher, we have a certain distance to donor organisations and perceive their work as something dirty and something that we would not rather get too closely involved with. There are colleagues that still think that way and who have a great amount of personal problems engaging in this kind of dialogue. For donor community this means that we often have a very specific kind of knowledge interests, which we probably should reformulate in such a way that they become accessible for a research community. For researchers this might mean less contact problems engaging with the dirty world of international cooperation and world of consultants and development experts.

The last thing that I would like to point out, something that we will need to do is to increase the knowledge of local conditions among development experts themselves. Because I see that people come with a long experience as development experts in other regions of the world which enables them, in principle, well implement and design projects. But they have a hard time or sometimes do not manage at all to adapt to local conditions and increase the knowledge of the local realities. This is not an ideal situation, especially when it comes to the formulation of the projects. For me, as a historian, I find it very hard and painful when I hear when people are speaking how the Uzbek-Kyrgyz conflict began in 1990 or when they talk about Uzbeks in the middle ages or when I hear endless references to the Silk Road in a completely meaningless context. I think that this is where increasing the knowledge realities on Central Asia amongst the development community would be, I guess, quite positive. Thank you for your attention.



20 years of Kyrgyz- German relations

- **(Maxim Ryabkov)** I would like to open the floor, perhaps, we should take three questions at a time and let people answer. This way it would be more dynamic. Please.
- **(David Gullette)** I have one question regarding donor coordination. Donor coordination among international organisations coming from the West would be ok or even would be brilliant. This topic that we were talking about for the last 20 years or so. It still does not really work. It would be better if we coordinated different regions of donors like financial, technical, political like our institution. What I would be interested in, and it is a question basically, if we coordinate but we still have the problem of competing donors coming from a completely different background, especially in Kyrgyzstan, very powerful Russia, Turkey, China and so on. I would be interested in how heavy competition from these donors is conflicting with the idea of donor coordination. What is your impression about this?
- **(Aijan Sharshenova)** What kind of difficulties do donors and implementing organisations encounter in cooperation with local actors, local beneficiaries, civil society organisations, state agencies and other stakeholders?
- **(Azamat Temirkulov)** This is not a question but a remark. Of course, we have lots of conflicts in Kyrgyzstan in a latent phase. This is not only in Kyrgyzstan. In any other countries we have latent conflicts. We can take examples from France, Spain, also in the UK. I think that the problem and issue should not be how to solve these conflicts, because they will always be, in Kyrgyzstan especially, but the problem is the state. Why did we have this escalation in 2010 and 1990? It is because of the weakness of the state. In the 1990s when the Soviet Union became weak and in 2010 when there was a collapse of the state. There is why I would like to support my colleague from GIZ on this approach which GIZ is implementing now. We should support state institutions in order to prevent escalations of these conflicts. I think that this



20 years of Kyrgyz- German relations

discussion of donor coordination was already raised in the beginning of 2000s. In 2003 in Batken oblast, when Herald Gunter was a chief of GIZ, we created this platform for the discussion between donors. Nine years passed but we are still discussing these issues. That is the first thing. The second thing that I wanted to point out is that the violence that was observed in 2010 continued only for 3-4 days. It was stopped without any external intervention. It was stopped by population themselves, by those two communities. So we, as academics and also practitioners, as donors, what we should pay attention is to this peace potential. There is peace potential and if we do not want further escalation of this conflict we have to, on one side, promote state institutions. On the other hand, we have to promote this peace potential rather than talking about conflict potential, about conflict sensitivity. If we are more talking about conflict, the more there is a risk that this conflict will happen. That is why the donor community should concentrate on peace potential which exists and we can and should develop. Thank you.

- **(Balihar Sanghera)** Hi. I have got couple of questions to a Bishkek panel. Some of the comments are very interesting. I was wondering if you could enlighten me on a few things. Firstly, there is a tendency, when we look at our donor community, we look at the external donors: UNDP, Save the Children, Danish Church. I was just wondering if Bishkek panel can tell me anything about internal donors. If there are any internal organisations that are hoping to support civil society movements. Are there any philanthropic foundations, organisations that can be more responsive to the local needs, as suppose to rely on external organisations, that seems to be doing primarily pushing and shoving. I wonder if Dariha or anyone else can talk about the philanthropic development. Is there potential for that, what are the constraints for that, rather than focusing on external? Clearly, Kyrgyzstan is not a poor country. It is highly unequal society, in which we have extremely very poor people but you also have extremely wealthy people. What are wealthy people doing about trying to



20 years of Kyrgyz- German relations

support some of these local needs? Just as you would have in 1970 Britain, when you had various different rich industrialists supporting very poor urban places. What are the potentials for something like that? As I said, it is not that Kyrgyzstan is a poor country, it is highly unequal country which results in this division. This kind of things leads me to what Jonathan was saying about local needs, local development. If I could push Jonathan a little bit more on that. When somebody talks to me about local, I do not know who that local person is. Invariably, I think that this local person is the one who can articulate the need of that community. Invariably, it would be a middle class person or someone with a sufficient cultural capital to be able to engage with the foundation or with NGO. How does the local need of a poor person filter into the engagement of various NGOs? To talk about local does not mean that you can address the local needs of the most deprived, the most disadvantaged, it is invariably the one who can speak the most and also the loudest. There is a tendency to think about the development as if we all in it together, it is not. People not all in it together. Again, it goes back to class, unequal society, it is in the interest of certain groups in that community, to increase their income resources or opportunities over others. It is not that they are all paddling in the same direction. This leads me to this final point, and what was interesting that has emerged in this discussion, is that there are two forms of polarised discussion. This is a crude characterisation. It seems that, on the one hand, we are talking about politics of recognition whether it could be about nationalism to the sense what is called the rights of minorities. How does that interface with the politics of development, with the politics of distribution, with the politics of trying to get more resources to the rural site as oppose to an urban site. How can we get a better interface between these two different kinds of politics? Politics of recognition, cultural recognition and politics of economic development. Is the logic of these two things different or can they complement each other? Those are some of the questions that I had for the Bishkek people.



20 years of Kyrgyz- German relations

- **(Maxim Ryabkov)** Emil Juraev and then we go to the panel for answers.
- **(Emil Dzuraev)** Hello, everyone. Unfortunately, I missed the presentations of the London panel but it was very enlightening, at least, a couple of speeches on the Bishkek side. Maxim is not happy that he did not get applause after his speech. It looks like, at least from the two speeches from the practitioners, we heard that donor coordination is one of the issues, one of the major problems. But there was also, especially in Balihar's comments, there is an emerging cooperation among the donor community and perhaps an emerging pattern of complementarity among them such that: some organisations are more equipped with tools and experience on humanitarian fast reaction programmes; some work longer terms; some are more experienced in cooperation with local NGOs; others are more experienced with working and coordinating work with state agencies. My practical question is: is there a pattern of complementarity that is rising, that is emerging between everyone involved in the development world here in Kyrgyzstan? Secondly and here, I think, I will point out the conceptual point that is, we somehow slipped into talking mostly about donor community and donor organisations. I thought may be it would be useful to talk about development community and development organisations because they are not simply bringing money in but also implementing programmes. In that light, I think Balihar's major question gets, perhaps, supplemented by my question. If that complementarity among the development community in Kyrgyzstan is emerging, to what extent is it good to begin with? Is it something that we do want where different organisations divide the labour, some people are taking longer terms, some shorter, some people deal with different sectors? Does this mean that certain kind of roles are delegated to local communities, not the donor community in Kyrgyzstan, which obviously Balihar's question is going to be addressed, but local agencies or partners, who are also perhaps carrying out a link in the chain of complementarity? Thank you.



20 years of Kyrgyz- German relations

- **(Philipp Reichmuth)** Ok, I have a bunch of questions. Let us do it in such a way that I will take everything that was about donor coordination and answer it in one go and then we can talk about the rest.

The first thing was the question about functioning of donor coordination in Kyrgyzstan and so called heaviness of it in the light of emergence of new donors like Turkey, Russia, China and so on, who are traditionally not engaging in donor coordination very effectively. First thing is, in fact, donor coordination in Kyrgyzstan is happening but, in large, it is not happening very efficiently. We can see that, in those moments when there is, for example, a scourge like in 2010 and 2011, towards the south there was a lot of stepping in each others' feet. In particular, Turkey implemented something that somebody else has been planing. In that sense we have a lot of room for improvement and I guess that the problems that are emerging here are very similar to those in other parts of the world where there is also an increasing new donors are emerging who do not care about those mechanisms, who ignore the Paris Declaration or did not sign it for whatever reason and so on. In that sense we could do better in Kyrgyzstan and I think that would be better for the effectiveness of the aid as a whole.

The second thing was about a pattern of complementarity from the donor community in Kyrgyzstan. Donor coordination here is happening. In some sectors it is more efficient than in others. For example, in the health, sector there is a central programme, which is working in close coordination with the Kyrgyz state, where donors basically engage in somewhat formalised but, in the end, very effective process in that direction. I think that it is better than everybody would develop their own programmes separately. It has its shortcomings but it is better than without it.

The other question is whether the complementarity is desirable. I would say that it certainly is because competition between donors on the recipient side competing for



20 years of Kyrgyz- German relations

attention “Can I give this money to this person or someone else?” is ultimately counterproductive as we empower the state in implementing some kind of coherent policy.

The question of the politics of cultural recognition versus economic development. I see that there is a certain antagonism simply because there are different schools of thought. But, in large, I would say that the politics of economic development has become more efficient and more successful at the moment when they take cultural recognition, as some of the basic tendencies and realities of what is happening around them, into account.

There was a question asked about what it means to work locally. Talking to somebody at the local level, who is normally not a peasant, are we not artificially increasing the cultural capital of somebody else, who then might be exploiting it in ways that directly address the needs of the local people? To that there are two answers. The first answer is that this is to some extent is unavoidable. Classic mechanism is participation - to engage people in decision making processes, to get them into committees, to get them to sit together, to voice their opinions and to take that as a basis of decision making. The other thing is that sometimes there are programmes aimed at where the ultimate beneficiary, a poor person, is but when they do not work with a poor person. For example, when you support micro-financing institutions, whether or not this is a good thing, you work with the institution which has its own assumptions about the needs of its clients. Beneficiaries supporting this micro-financing institution, of course, are local population, even if the manager of the micro-financing institution also profits.

There was a question about difficulties of interaction between donors and local actors, government and non-government actors and I think Dariha has something to say on the same subjects. I will just give a few examples of difficulties that we



20 years of Kyrgyz- German relations

encounter. The first is having a common language. GIZ does not have seconded staff in Kyrgyzstan, who speak Kyrgyz, except me. I speak it a little bit at the bazar level but normally people get angry because I have an Uzbek accent. There is only a minority who speak Russian. So the first problem is that a dialogue between international experts and local communities goes through intermediaries. There is also a translation problem that effects the language but also the values and underlying semiotic systems and everything. The second is a question of expectations. One of the major failures of the international donor community in Kyrgyzstan was that people in Kyrgyzstan largely do not understand how the donor community works and how donor interactions actually work. When I am explaining that in an institution, which has international cooperation, people understand it in a way: “Ok, so you are giving us money, or you are building us a hospital, or you are building bridges”. Some of our projects do but this is not the main line of our work. I have to explain this a lot of times. We are actively working with journalists and so on to help people understand what a donor really is, or what an implementing organisation really is and this is quite necessary.

The third question is one of distrust. I come as a German and I have some money to spend. This cannot be right. “What are your actual interests, you German? We know that we are in a strategic location on the planet in Kyrgyzstan, you are some kind of spy. You also speak Russian, so you must be some kind of spy”.

The last point is that it is very difficult in the beginning to engage in common planning because there are different ideas to what it means planning, implementing a project, on what kind of mechanisms and procedures you have to make a plan, what the plan actually is, how the plan should be monitored and so on. From that point of view, because planning is the beginning of every kind of intervention in the



20 years of Kyrgyz- German relations

development world, it is at the beginning one already has a certain kind of barrier that one has to overcome if one wants to implement something meaningful. That is it.

- **(Dariha Erketaeva)** Peace assets, locally identified needs, and internal resources. Regarding those three questions, I would like to say that, our needs are identified locally. But this merely means that if, in our programme over 200 people are employed in implementing activities (and this is somehow working), quarter of this is community mobilisers. They are local people, Kyrgyz, Uzbeks, Russians. They are engaging with the communities directly, teaching them how to plan, how to identify their own needs, how to raise them, how to make their voices heard. When I say, there is an infrastructure project, implementation of a drinking water pipe, that actually takes maximum a month to implement, but the original plan of implementation is, at least, for one year. The rest of the time, it takes exactly this: identifying local needs. Working with local communities takes a huge amount of time and a huge amount of resources and energy at the same time. That is what we mean when we are saying how we identify local needs and solutions to them.

In the programme that I am working, where we try to identify the needs of more than 180 communities, it turned out that there are no visible conflicts or threats or tensions but rather peace assets. We try to engage the local leaders of communities, those who are willing to work and get together. They are the identifiers and they are the peace assets. Many of our projects, internally we call them peace promoters, we do not have any local businesses or foundations or grants or support. But we have a lot of cooperation with local authorities at the level of aiy okmoty where they contribute quite a lot. This has increased their ownership, not only physically, but mentally as well. If they say that part of the money came from us, for this water pipe, they own it, for at least several years.



20 years of Kyrgyz- German relations

About the donor community. I feel that, in this room, when we generally speak about donor community or donor coordination, we confuse these terms or equally use these terms with reference to grant funded projects. Grant funded projects, for many, mean donor community, which is not the case. It is like local NGOs is a child and international NGO, where I work, is an older sibling. A grant giving donor organisation, let us say Asian Development Bank or USAID is a parent. Then there are even bigger grant givers like governments. When we refer to a donor community, we refer to the parent only, not to international NGOs or local NGOs. This leads to difficulties in communication coordination. Just like a little child is not often heard by his sister, parent or grandparent, we also have similar hierarchical, horizontal level of miscoordination and miscommunication. Traditionally, local NGOs and international NGOs are implementers and they are working quite closely listening to each other. But there is a big gap between these two and the donor community and the national government. Child and sister are often heard by the local authorities like aiy okmoty, rayon administration. There is often very good cooperation, in fact. But local authorities are in turn not heard by the national government. Here I will give a very quick example. Recently there was a very big conference on the parliament's role in conflict prevention. The target group was the parliament and the government. I came very excited to this conference. We had a legal analysis of a local legislation, how it promotes security of local businesses and what the contradictions are and what should be improved in that legislation. I thought I would be talking about this and handing over the analysis to the MPs. However, the MPs literally understood the title of the conference. They understood it as conflict prevention inside the parliament, inside this house. Ata-Jurt started conflict with Ata-Maken and it was about conflict prevention inside this house but not the coordination and information exchange with us at all. Then we left. Local and international NGOs are trying to knock the doors of the national government through donor community because OSCE, UN, GIZ have



20 years of Kyrgyz- German relations

open doors to the government more than us. We think that, may be, somehow it would be possible to go through that and start this exchange going. But with the capacity of our government it is difficult and so far it has not been possible.

Lastly, about the coordination. Kyrgyzstan is a very small country and we have a very small pool of donors, very small pool of projects. It is, in fact, compared to African countries or South-East Asia or Latin America, we are small and somehow it is not possible to manage coordination. In the south there is so called Early Recovery Network organisation coordination, at least, they exchange information and contacts and we know whom to contact in case of the need. It is taking place but not very effectively.

- **(Maxim Ryabkov)** Thank you very much. Actually what you said about siblings and children and so on, sometimes it is called the ladder of contempt: IMF> WB> UN> International NGOs> NGOs.

I wanted to briefly react to this idea of state capacity once again. Why I was talking about the state is because, yes indeed as Azamat said, the conflict in the escalation sense ended in June. It ended with a very clear end, there were winners and there were losers. Winners were not the communities at large, the losers were not communities at large. They were specific people who won in this conflict. And this put an end to it. It is like the situation in Sri Lanka to some extent. After that it was not quite clear what it meant to have a conflict transformation process. Because, there was no conflict, those things already ended, that was it. You could say that there are some ongoing redistribution of property, money taken, it was going on in 2012 as well but it was the aftermath. And this aftermath was mediated by the state. And if I look at the state, I do not see that it is particularly weak. It is, may be, weak for our purposes, it does not want to do what we want to do, but this is not a weakness. I do



20 years of Kyrgyz- German relations

not want to do what you want me to do, that does not mean that I am weak. I do not want to develop a strategy, I do not need that strategy.

As an interest group I might be sufficiently strong, or I might be serving my own constituencies and this is, I think, a conceptual problem. The conflicts and mediation at the community level, I think, is important. But in many ways it is overshadowed by the issues of how it is structured beyond the community at the state level and who is winning and who is losing there; not in terms of ethnic groups, but in terms of very specific individuals and elite groups. Ok. May be London.

- **(Sally Cummings)** One more comment Montu and Nick.
- **(Siddharth Saxena)** Basically, I wanted to point out when we were discussing a notion of a state capacity it has many dimensions. The key thing that we often miss out from this discussion is that, while donor community is as I mentioned earlier another community, all that information and expertise is not getting institutionalised, it is just float around at a different space. A lot of discourse, which takes people away from their own institutions, your university is corrupt, your local whatever is corrupt, so people, especially older people with best expertise actually not even finding motivation to engage with that. I think this is one of the structural issues. Combined with this, comes a bigger problem, a procurement capacity, which expertise the state or nation or institution wants to buy it. It does not have that because it has not incorporated that; while, the global offers for that are many. Internal capacity is selected which is the best one for that particular place, it is very badly limited. That is my main comment. And one reprimand I would say is that, in the discussion, one small phrase was used, I do not know if other people would agree, the danger of re-islamisation. I think that it is very inappropriate word that was used. It came out from Bishkek. In a Muslim society, what is the meaning of re-



20 years of Kyrgyz- German relations

islamisation. Is it a danger? That is the issue that I do not want to open now but I just had opened it.

- **(Nick Megoran)**. I wanted to ask a question but there is no time. So I would want to finish with the worry and wish and a comment. The worry is that we are all in this panel share what has happened to real Jonathan. Has he been overthrown in a revolution? And we wish new Jonathan more success than the old regime had it in donor coordination. My comment is this. It is in reply to the comment that Maxim made. It is not a nationalism that is the cause of the conflict but interest based calculations. There is never a single cause to a complicated social phenomenon such as an urban riot. We all look at different aspects, ideological aspects to the context such as nationalism, inequality, economic aspects, interest based calculation. All of these are more or less significant elements and I think we need to think ourselves as a community of scholars working in collaborative projects to identify and try to understand the overall phenomenon. Based on our discussion, people here in London and you in Bishkek, I feel privileged to be part of this multidisciplinary community that is attempting to listen to each other with this technology which worked remarkably well. Thank you for organisers for that.
- **(Sally Cummings)** Thank you very much, Nick. I think that one theme that has obviously occupied all of us today, it is a theme that was coming up in a number of round tables and workshops recently, which is, how research and policy communities work together. The difficulties that researchers had and Jonathan mentioned this a little bit, how you in a sense communicate sometimes very complex issues in a quick practical way to policy makers. On the other hand, the policy world is often searching for, understandably, templates of actions and possibly is not always finding them in academic writing. I think we have on both sides a challenge ahead to continue that interaction and try to find ways in which somewhere we can



20 years of Kyrgyz- German relations

meet in the middle. Obviously not all academic research is oriented to policy and should not be. In those that we are attempting to communicate our findings in a meaningful ways, I think we have to think more carefully and dynamically about the best form that should occur. I think that this is exciting. I would like to think that this has been, in some ways, an attempt to do that and I hope we will have many more occasions in the future to see Bishkek in London and possibly London in Bishkek. From my point of view, I am very grateful to everyone, who spared their time to come down or up or across to participate today. Likewise to all of you, it is a Friday night for you, very much thank you again for participating and your comments. Thank you again to the donors: OSCE Academy, Ashurst, and Kyrgyz-British Society and two Universities listed St. Andrews and Kent. I am sure that Maxim will echo this, on my side particular thanks to Kanykey Jailobaeva, without whom I think none of us would be here. Thank you. Maxim, I will pass over to you for the final word.

- **(Maxim Ryabkov)** I would like to thank everyone for coming. Kanykey, I join fully in the applause from Sally and everyone. Thank you for the donors, Friedrich Ebert also to be mentioned here. I hope we could use the advantage of technology more for such meetings. I just want to say that we will publish, as we discussed with Sally already, we will publish the transcript of this discussion. I like transcripts. There is a drama in them. We will publish the transcript with some introduction. Hopefully this will be published within a reasonable time, it is not easy, with editing and all, it is not easy. So thank you very much all. Sally thank you for initiating this event, I hope we will have more of this kind of events.