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Bulletin: Genocidal Massacres in Kyrgyztan - Two Muslim Nationalities

Breaking Story

A News Report with a Timeline and GPN Editorial Note

Kyrgyz are slaughtering Uzbeks -- Two Muslim Turkic-speaking peoples in Central Asia -- in Kyrgyztan, a Central European Country bordering on China, Tajikstan, and Uzbekistan; Tens of thousands of Uzbeks are fleeing to Uzbekistan.

As Issue 3 of *GPN* moves toward publication, word reaches the western world of a new eruption of mass killing of civilians, driven along ethnic-national lines.

Reporters describe an eruption of "sudden, brutal violence" in which the KRYGZ MAJORITY are killing and wounding people from the UZBEK MINORITY. An International Red Cross spokesman said more than 700 people were killed in the one city of Osh and more than 3000 were in need of medical attention for wounds. In one report, over 70,000 people were reported to be fleeing the country as of June 14, 2010. Another report said 150,000 people. Uzbekistan announced it was closing its border to further refugees.

Western media began advancing possible interpretations of the facts of the genocidal killing including a mix of inter-ethnic persecution -- despite the fact that the two people are tied by no less than culture, language and religion; a classic divide between herders and farmers; a classic dynamic of commerce --including trading in opium - being predominantly in the hands of the one people (the victim Uzbeks); and including a political struggle of an ousted former president who is battling to return to power and is said to be hiring killers to execute the genocidal pogroms against the Uzbek who have supported the new president.

Excerpts from Press Reports

Kyrgyz mobs burned Uzbek villages and slaughtered their residents in the worst ethnic rioting this Central Asian nation has seen in 20 years, sending Uzbeks fleeing across the border into Uzbekistan. Most of the Uzbek refugees were elderly people, women and children, and many had gunshot wounds.

Fires set by rioters have destroyed most of Osh, the second-largest city in Kyrgyzstan. Triumphant crowds of Kyrgyz men took control of Osh as the few Uzbeks still left in the city of 250,000 barricaded themselves in their neighborhoods. Fires continued to rage across Osh and shots were heard but police were nowhere to be seen.

The rioting has significant political overtones. Former President Kurmanbek Bakiyev was ousted in a bloody uprising in April and fled the country. Uzbeks have backed Kyrgyzstan's interim government, while many in Kyrgyz in the south support the toppled president.

In New York, U.N. Secretary-General Ban Ki-Moon said he was "alarmed by the scale of the clashes" and the mounting death toll and was discussing what aid the U.N. could send to help the fleeing refugees.

Who

Perpetrators:

Gangs of ethnic Kyrgyz young men from southern Kyrgyzstan, armed at first with metal rods and stones, and later with automatic rifles and shotguns.

Victims:

Men, women and children of Uzbek ethnic group, in the living in southern Kyrgyzstan - killed, wounded. Homes, businesses and property were plundered or burnt. There were many reports of violent groups reportedly committing gang rape. Thousands of refugees tried to escape to Uzbekistan - some were attacked on the way, and some died in stampede at border crossing.

Political figures:

- "Interim President Roza Otunbayeva - a political rival of former President Kurmanbek Bakiyev. Leads government after uprising in April 2010.
- "Former President Kurmanbek Bakiyev - was ousted in an uprising in April 2010, and has fled the country. Negotiated potential closure of US airbase in Manas, Kyrgyzstan with Russian and US governments. Was accused of corruption, but was reelected in July 2009. Now residing in Belarus.
- "Former President Askar Akayev (1991-2005). Was elected (sole candidate) after independence of Kyrgyzstan in 1991, reelected (arguably) in 2000, and removed in 2005 by revolution. Was replaced by President Bakiyev. Currently lives in Moscow.

What, Where

The violence broke out just before midnight on Thursday 10 June, across Kyrgyzstan's southern market city of Osh. Gangs of Kyrgyz young men, armed with metal rods and stones attacked Uzbek homes and businesses, looting, burning and killing. Later, the rioters stole weapons from police stations and continued with the attacks with automatic rifles and shotguns. Throughout Saturday and Sunday, the violence spread from Osh to JalalAbad (70 kilometers from Osh) and the villages surrounding it.

As a response to the rioting, ethnic Uzbeks ambushed about 100 Kyrgyz men on a road near Jalal-Abad and took them hostage. In the nearby village of Bazar-Kurgan, a mob of 400 Uzbeks overturned cars and killed a police captain. Armed Kyrgyz men assembled in the village to retaliate.

In the Osh and Jalal-Abad areas, people were trapped inside houses and basements, afraid to go out to get supplies, and afraid to collect bodies of people who had been killed, to identify and bury them. Some people were buried without being identified. Thousands of people fled from their homes. Most of these people are now in need of humanitarian aid, mostly water, food, clothes for their children, and shelter.

Several days after the violence began, Interim President Roza Otunbayeva sent an urgent request to Russia, asking that troops be deployed to stop the riots, but Russia refused. A Kyrgyz volunteer troop was organized and sent to the south, with an order to "shoot to kill" to stop the violence.

Context

Ethnic Uzbeks are the largest minority group (13-14.2 percent) in Kyrgyzstan, a multiethnic state of 5.1 million people, of whom ethnic Kyrgyz comprise 67.4 percent. Ethnic Uzbeks are concentrated in the southern regions of Osh and Jalal-Abad, in the fertile Fergana Valley region. Both groups are Muslim Sunnis, although there is slight difference between them, the Kyrgyz still relating to some traditional beliefs.

The current rioting has significant political context. A political uprising this April, a few weeks ago - in which demonstrators were shot with over 80 killed - removed former president Kurmanbek Bakiyev from power. He fled the country to Belarus. An interim government was set up, led by former prominent opposition figure and Foreign Minister Roza Otunbayeva.

Uzbeks have backed Kyrgyzstan's interim government, while many Kyrgyz in the south support the removed president. The new government, though unelected and made up of an uneasy alliance of political forces, quickly established control over the capital and the north of the country, but not in the south.

A wider, international, context revolves around the US airbase in Manas, near the capital Bishkek, a base used to support the NATO mission in Afghanistan. Kyrgyzstan hosts a Russian military base too. Formerly, the Russian government has pressured Bakiyev's government to shut the US base. In 2009, it offered a \$2.1 Billion aid loan to

Kyrgyzstan as incentive to shut the airbase. This was even accepted in a government vote. But in last-minute negotiations, former president Bakiyev reversed this decision and allowed the base to stay, more than tripling the rent collected from the US government from \$17 Million to \$ 60 Million a year. This move lost him Russian support. Russia was the first country to recognize Otunbayeva's government in April.

When the ethnic riots broke out, interim leader Roza Otunbayeva turned to the Russian President, requesting that Russia send troops to stop the fighting in Kyrgyzstan. The Russian government refused to send troops immediately, but a spokeswoman for President Dmitri Medvedev said that no decision would be made until Russia consulted with other members of the Collective Security Treaty Organization, a regional security alliance of former Soviet republics. Russia did send 300 troops, to protect its own military base, in the north, away from the riots.

Pakistan and Germany sent aid to the troubled regions, and China was expected to send food and medical supplies.

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GPN Editorial Note:

Who knows?

Who cares?

We westerners can barely read or pronounce the names. Most of us have no idea where these countries lie except as we finally get the notion that these countries are on the western side of a country that does concern us more and more, China, but we still have little to no sense of who these peoples and nations are. And given that they are also Muslims, our more natural 'white man Judeo-Christian' sensitivities are not

immediately mobilized.

Actually the West does care somewhat because the US has a base supporting NATO operations and the Russians have military facilities in the country.

But in principle no one of US gives a --- real enough concern that, even following the Holocaust, and Cambodia, and Rwanda and the former Yugoslavia, and more, there is no international machinery in place to respond IMMEDIATELY and AUTOMATICALLY to reports of mass killings—genocide—of civilians.

The idea of a standing international machinery that would respond the way we want neighborhood police forces to respond to reports of murder and attempted murder is so removed from the realm of human civilization's political possibility that it feels juvenile and sophomoric to raise such a conception.

So genocide in our world is an event of mass killing of civilians about which, in the best scenario, months will pass of gathering alleged information, and months more for arriving at a consensual definition by major governments and for other parts of the weak international system that genocide is taking place, and months more before powerful enough players may decide, if they will, and if there are still more victims waiting to be killed, to intervene.

Why wasn't Auschwitz bombed by the US or the British?

How many years did the UN Human Rights Commission (then in its better days of not yet being coopted to represent Muslim countries' agenda for bashing Israel and the US) take to study the genocide in Cambodia and reluctantly come to the conclusion that an "autogenocide" was taking place?

How unknowing, impotent and sabotaging was our world, and some of our otherwise great leaders (like US President Bill Clinton and UN Secretary-General Kofi Anan) when it came to expanding U.N. resources for stopping the genocidal rampage in Rwanda?

This is also an appropriate context in which to remember that Cambodia and Rwanda, among others, prove that genocidal killing does *not* need obvious existing dividing lines between religions or nations, but that our primitive human thinking can easily come up with definition of US-THEM; dehumanize THEM and attribute to them bestial destructive potential and intentions towards US and our way of life; and then power-mad leaders light the matches, and another genocide is under way. And it can move to killing millions of people rapidly!

Is it really naïve and juvenile to raise the question of developing an "International Peace Army" or a "World Rapid Response Force"?

After all, that is obviously what will happen **after** the next great disaster of Genocide by a Weapon of Mass Destruction – especially if the victim people(s) belong to the then

'white folk' elites of our human civilization.

What should be done?

Right now, Kyrgyzstan is at a critical tipping point.

Genocide results from human choice and bystander inaction. We are now at a tipping point. The conflict could erupt into a genocidal civil war with spillover into neighboring countries, as happened in Darfur and Rwanda. Right now, we recommend implementation of Security Council Resolution 1674, the Responsibility to Protect, which specifies that there is an international responsibility to protect vulnerable populations from genocidal threats, when sovereign states are no longer able or willing to do so. To implement this recommendation, we recommend that the Russian Federation and the US, both of which have sizeable military bases in Kyrgyzstan, join immediately form a Rapid Deployment Force to restore quiet, order and safety and protect vulnerable populations from massacre, rape, expulsion, and plundering. Whatever their political differences, both, as Great Powers, have not only an opportunity, but a responsibility.

The ultimate responsibility for the genocidal massacres rests with the perpetrators. But should the violence continue, Russia and the US will stand accountable as passive bystanders who stood by and did nothing-as happened with the UN Forces in Rwanda, who were ordered to not interfere when the mass killing started there. The choice rests with the leaders of both Great Powers to move, and to do so rapidly.

-- Yael Stein, Elihu D. Richter, Israel W. Charny

[Please click here to view the Timeline for Kyrgyztan](#)

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