

“This conflict does not involve politics anymore. The new leader does not offer any innovations or changes, and the old leader does the same,” expert in conflicts **Tatiana Vygovskaya-Kamenko** commented on the attempted detention of the ex-president of Kyrgyzstan, Almazbek Atambaev, in his house in the village of Koi-Tash and the clashes that followed.

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Unfortunately, this outcome has been obvious. Since early 2019, we have considered the risk of violent conflicts and mass riots.

The main criteria of this risk was information about managerial inequity, restriction of access to resources on regional grounds, decrease in the number of social lifts for representatives of one region, and increase of such lifts for representatives of other region, measurement of the protest mood level, as well as the application of this data to the images of both political leaders.

Based on this assessment, there have been no other chances for another outcome, the point was when it was going to happen.

The fact that the situation would be exactly as it is now was clear right away. That is, there was more than enough time. On the day of the inauguration Almazbek Atambaev received a message that he had better leave the political stage entirely, and he publicly gave up on this idea

Moreover, he started to get prepared for the power confrontation both in debates and in practice. The authorities had to respond quickly, clearly and effectively to such challenges, choose one certain strategy and implement it rapidly and consistently.

The best choice for the authorities would surely be absolute freedom of the opposition and civil society, whereas the authorities should have focused more on managerial justice and a balance and development of regions.

This situation could be avoided if the violent suppression, mass arrests and verdicts were chosen. The power scenario should have been implemented quickly and purposefully against

one specific person, not half of the political establishment of the country.

The authorities started to detain the supporters of Atambaev on cooked-up charges. It took them too long to lift immunity from the ex-president. It took them too long to make charges against the ex-president, which they renounced from time to time. Atambaev saw this overt threat to himself and didn't waste this time.

Many experts think the third violent shift in power would be the most real, and its effect would depend on the successor, and we'll see whether it is the best outcome of the situation or going to aggravate the conflict.

However, there are other options.

**First option** - the parties won't have enough resources to maintain power confrontation, which can lead to the degradation of the establishment, conflict transition to latent stage, appeals to outside players and chaotic resource search, after which the country could be divided into spheres of influence and supervisory control could take place.

**Second option** - the parties will have enough resources for a long-term power confrontation, in which case a long-term civil war becomes a real probability because the country has a lot of unsolved conflicts that would fuel the confrontation and violence, justify it in terms of ideology, mitigate its deterrents.

**Third option** - Islamisation of the country. It's clear that one of the parties to the conflict would be Islamic religious groups as the secular authorities have brought discredit on themselves. In case of long-term violent conflict, the caliphate would be taken as stability and justice, while democracy as chaos, pain and violence. In this case, the Egyptian or Iranian options become most probable.

**Fourth option** - the leaders would make an arrangement, divide the spheres of influence and reach a compromise. However, this option is unlikely to happen because one would want to control all spheres of influence, and the other wouldn't give them away easily. Even if they reach the compromise, it would not last long because both parties gravitate toward the autocratic leadership and total control.

**Another peaceful option** is that the Russian Federation would clearly take the side of one of the leaders and find a compromise. However, there are few preconditions for that, while the Russian ministry of foreign affairs has clearly expressed its hands-off attitude, although this could be a short-term decision.

### Customised “rake”

There is always a chance to have two parties meet at the bargaining table and solve the situation peacefully, and it's possible in a few options:

- Strict pressure by the third powerful player, for example, Russia or China, which is unknown yet.
- If the parties see the delusiveness of their resources, and want to disguise it with a compromise. To do this, the parties should see they have little chances to win. There's almost no hope that both politicians could be stopped with blood or destruction.
- An escape of one of the leaders. In this case, the supporters are likely to negotiate in order to find a new strategy.

However, which of the options could work remains to be seen. The situation in the country is that the pressure from the pacifistic part of society can hardly cause negotiations of political elites.

Unfortunately, the situation now resembles conflict analyses of the situation in the Horn of Africa countries, which is also called the Muslim Horn (Sudan, Somali, Chad, Egypt, Algeria, Tunis). If destructive religious organisations get involved now, the situation will be much alike.

This is the customised “rake” to step on. In fact, this is degradation of the same conflict that has existed throughout independence of the country. But now it has turned into semi-criminal skirmish in the country and lost all signs of civilisation.

Unfortunately, this conflict does not involve politics anymore. The new leader [Sooronbai Zheenbekov] does not offer any innovations or changes, and the old leader [Almazbek Atambaev] does the same. People don't fight for new initiatives, styles of management, participation, they just support or don't support the leaders who are fighting with each other

There are no slogans such as the fight against family ruling or something else, unlike in the past. This is just an overt race for power, harsh, primitive and grim. And the situation is incomparable to the situations in other CIS countries.

*Main photo: AKIpress*

*The opinions expressed in the article do not reflect the position of the editorial.*



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