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TRANSCRIPT

"THE PITFALLS OF PEACEBUILDING: LESSONS FROM KYRGYZSTAN, PROSPECTS FOR UKRAINE"

A Conversation With Nicholas Megoran and Inna Pidluska

Moderator: Jeff Goldstein

* * *TRANSCRIBER'S NOTE: BEST ATTEMPT MADE WITH FOREIGN NAMES AND LOCATIONS; MEGORAN NOT ALWAYS AUDIBLE ON MIC* * *

ANNOUNCER:

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JEFF GOLDSTEIN:

In the summer of 2010-- about three months after the overthrow of the-- the Bakiyev government in Bishkek, inter-ethnic violence broke out in Southern Kyrgyzstan. After the fact-- an independent international commission inquiry into the events of Southern Kyrgyzstan was formed, and I want to just go over a few of their conclusions-- about the events. They indicated that the violence led to significant loss of life and injury, of which the majority of victims were ethnic Uzbeks.

In total, about 470 people died. About 1900 people received medical assistance at hospitals. Many thousands of people were displaced. There was also significant property damage-- again, to a disproportionately high number of ethnic Uzbek on the p-- properties.

The report then goes onto state (NOISE) that if the evidence of some acts committed during certain attacks against the mahallahs in Osh at 11th, 12th and 13th of June was proven beyond reasonable doubt in a court of law, those acts would amount to crimes

against humanity. These are murder, rape, other forms of sexual violence, physical violence and persecution against an identifiable group on ethnic grounds.

Unfortunately, in the aftermath of the violence, international com-- commission reported that violations continued. They noted that there have been serious violations of international human rights law committed by the state in the aftermath of the events. There is a consistent and reliable body of material which intends to show that acts of torture were committed in detention centers by the authorities of Kyrgyzstan in the aftermath of the June event.

Criminal investigations and trials, which have resulted from the June events, (NOISE) have been marked by breaches of the ICCPR Fair Trial Right. There have been selective prosecutions targeting ethnic Uzbek minorities. Today in Ukraine, we are seeing a different, but not altogether dissimilar scenario, unfortunately, involving many of the same phenomena, including-- high numbers of people killed.

I've seen estimates of over 4,000 now, very large numbers of people misplaced. We're witnessing something a little bit new in history, what many people are now calling a hybrid war. It's part invasion and part civil conflict. And while the conflict in Ukraine is not ethnic, (COUGH) necessarily, as it was in Kyrgyzstan, it does have an element playing on regional tensions in the country: east versus West in the Ukraine, just as it was North versus South in Kyrgyzstan.

In Kyrgyzstan, (SNIFFING) once the violence ended, the international community responded by produce-- providing a great deal of assistance, some of it humanitarian, but a great deal that focused on peace building and on efforts to try and reconcile-- groups in there.

We are pleased today to be joined by Professor Nick Megoran of Newcastle University, who will be discussing the findings of his study, "Peacebuilding and Reconciliation Product-- Projects in Southern Kyrgyzstan." And we're also pleased to be joined remotely by my colleague, Inna Pidluska, who is the Deputy Director of the International Renaissance Foundation in Kiev.

She will discuss the situation in Eastern Ukraine and recommendations for what needs to be done to try to rebuild peace and overcome the effects of the conflict today. This even is on the record and is being recorded. So I'll turn it over to Nick, then.

NICHOLAS MEGORAN:

Thank you, Jeff. And-- greetings to Inna and Michael, and I'll say, thank you, all of you for coming. As Jeff has said, the-- the violence in Osh in 2010 was-- was terrible and unprecedented in the scale of the independent Kyrgyzstan. Osh is a city I have been visiting and working on for 20 years. I was particularly disturbed by that tragedy, (NOISE) and what I want to talk about today is-- is the various-- your various international responses to it, and I want to talk about the peace building and reconciliation and mediation responses to that.

These make striking claims to success, and in this talk, I want to question those claims to success. It is, of course, difficult to-- it's difficult to measure how successful programs are that are designed to build tolerance, it's just an intangible resource, and it's also difficult to work out how we're able to assess the ability, the-- the success of programs as they're designed to a prevent conflict occurring, once would be note that not occurs as a result of these programs.

So what I want to-- what I want you guys to know is, not-- a dogmatic-- refutation of these programs, but raise some critical questions about them. And the talk is based on a report that OSF and CIPRI (PH) commissioned myself and Amir Saddlebotdiva (PH) and David Lewis and John Henshaw (PH) who are unable to be here today, commissioned us to-- to write last year.

And I want to do (COUGH) four things, firstly, outline the programs I'm discussing, and then raise some questions about them, then think about how we can evaluate them and finish with some conclusions and suggestions. So firstly, an outline of the programs I'm talking about. These were-- I'm calling it peacebuilding and reconciliation and mediation programs. And very soon after the violence, a number of international agencies began implementing them. So (COUGH) for example, USAID spent $10 million between 2011 and 2013 funding over 163 different programs.

These included building parks in multi-- multi-ethnic areas of Osh to try and promote cooperation. It's involved-- engaging young people living in the local state with peace building. And they've funded these over 14 multi-ethnic regions across the south of Kyrgyzstan.

The E.U. spent 4.5 million Euros in the same period working with seven international and nine local NGOs. And what these typically did was identify local community leaders, (COUGH) give them reconciliation and peace building (NOISE) seminars, and then ask them to go train others.

So the OSCE, for example, claims it trained 750 mediators during this period, and International Alert claimed 700. But-- why were these adopted so quickly and why were they-- why were there so many of these programs? Well, there's a number of reasons.

Partially, it's-- it's bandwagon; so I interviewed the-- a person who worked for these organizations, and-- and he described it as-- as this. He said, "It seems a big scary, it seems to me that this is an idea that people seemed to work well in one case, so everyone jumped on it."

But more-- more often than not, it is not based on-- it is based on misunderstanding and misrecognition. In last June, there was no violence in Uzgen, which is a town in Southern Kyrgyzstan, why was this? There are lots of explanations and theories given.

But one is that mediators stepped in front of the crowd and (COUGH) calmed them down, so internationals went ballistic saying, "Ah, yes, if we have these everywhere,

next time, they will stop it." Another reason for the popularity is that these were inexpensive.

They were also-- they looked good on spreadsheets, it's easy to claim-- train 700 mediators. They work very well with short-term budgets, lots of the people we spoke to said, "Well, we-- we were given this money, we had to spend it by a certain period, so these worked well."

And they all said (COUGH) they were easy to implement through pre-existing in local partners. Many international agencies worked with a small number of local NGOs who-- who had become quite adept to professionally delivering these projects. (COUGH)

So that's what I'm talking about. Based on our interviews, which were with-- we did about 100 interviews with-- people who were working for these organizations, implementing projects, with-- with people who were trained by these projects, we-- we had to identify a number of reasons which caused us to call them into question. And one of these is that these projects misdiagnosed the causes of conflict, they misdiagnosed the caused the of conflict. Basically, they see lack of familiarity between (UNINTEL) people as the problem, rather than a lack of justice or economic opportunity. Or rather as many of our respondents said, the shenanigans of the elites.

So for example, we interviewed (UNINTEL) who's the head teacher of an Uzbek school in Osh. He's participated in several of these (UNINTEL) seminars, and this is what he said to me when he said-- in quote-- he said, "My opinion is that such seminars are useless. I don't understand how these trainers can teach us to tolerate."

"In reality, people living in Central Asia are tolerant and have learned this from their parents and grandparents. If these people really want to help, they should stay away from ideology. I don't (NOISE) need them to tell me how to build my relationship with my Kyrgyz friends. I had Kyrgyz friends and I still have them. Look, my assistant is Uzbek and her husband is Kyrgyz, how can they teach us how to live together? These people know better than anybody else. They're just wasting resources. So much money is wasted on transportation or on accommodation and various materials."

"I think it would be-- more sensible if they used this money to buy computers and give them to the school, that would make (UNINTEL)." And (MIC NOISE) he argued that elites were to blame for causing the violence. Another, for example, I spent a day taking part in a school in Osh that have-- a peace building event between Kyrgyz and Uzbeks, Kyrgyz school joins Uzbek school.

Many of the activities involved, Uzbek children speaking Kyrgyz, dressing up in Kyrgyz clothes, eating Kyrgyz food and singing songs about their love for Kyrgyzstan. There was a jolly inter-communal dancing session, where people swamped ethnic hats and danced together. And then, the visiting Kyrgyz head teacher gave a speech, a very emotional speech, and she insisted that we would never let bad events of last year come (COUGH) come between us, it would be as if nothing had ever happened

and she went through a series of wishes that the friendship between us will never be broken.

Now listening to her was a senior teacher in the school for a long time and she asked me about urban riots in England in 2011, last summer, she'd seen them on the television. And I explained that protests began when the murder of a black teenager by police-- occurred in custody-- that others used it as an excuse to rob and to loot.

And she said (UNINTEL) they must have taught our Kyrgyz that. Her (UNINTEL) was that standing near us when we were talking were private security guards, which the school-- which the parents of the children had hired to protect the school and their children from attacking-- by mobs of-- of Kyrgyz criminals and youths who, at that time, were-- were preying on the (UNINTEL). So fine words about friendship and working alongside each other and wearing each of those hats meant little when ongoing justices were still being perpetrated. (COUGH)

Osh's (UNINTEL) expressed to me the lack of justice and especially, police and court corruptions-- the main obstacles (UNINTEL). That's the first-- first round, to question these initiatives, that they misdiagnose the causes behind them.

And the second factor, the second criticism that many people raised to us was the way in which people were recruited to take part in these seven acts (PH). There is an emphasis on diversity; women and the elderly and mixed ages and people from different regions, different ethnic groups should be involved.

What-- what actually happens genuinely is that community leaders are identified, or future leaders and-- and this is who's worked with. One of the criticisms that was made is that this fails to deal with the so-called "angry young men" who perpetrated most of the violence. (BACKGROUND VOICE) The main violence against the Uzbek neighborhoods seems to have been committed by young-- young Kyrgyz men from (UNINTEL). So for example, Norbek (PH) who is this mayor of a small town, a Kyrgyz man, in Southern Kyrgyzstan, he's obviously trying to explain to donors (PH) the importance of-- of working with deprived communities, and tackling (NOISE) the structure inequalities, his concerns were dismissed.

He said this, "I get tired of trying to explain the real business of conflicts and to international organizations, they come and circle the affected areas in search of the sources of conflict there." I told them, "You (UNINTEL), conflict didn't originate here, these homes were attacked by people who lived in the other zone, one of the ethnic Kyrgyz mountainous areas. Go and search for problems there." Like Norbek, many state officials in Osh didn't understand the donor's obsession in working with ethnically mixed neighborhoods.

For instance, the USAID built eight parks, in what's it called, "targeted multicultural locations" in order to create safe spaces to help-- to build confidence in each other and prevent conflicts. The participants in Osh seminars that we interviewed questioned the logic of organizing reconciliation with urban committee's residents, where most Uzbek homes were attacked by Kyrgyz who came from external, monolithic areas.

An Uzbek NGO, Lodo Noshno (PH), people living in Osh have no complaints with each other. But now they, the donors, are reconciling people who live in mixed territories that they have problems with-- with each other here. They should do peace work in Holkulhah (PH) and other regions, not here. Several Uzbeks we spoke to insisted that even a grudge against their Kyrgyz neighbors, (BACKGROUND VOICE) and they wanted the donors to go work with rural Kyrgyz youth.

One-- a local head of-- a residential neighborhood in an Uzbek area in Osh told us, "Osh city residents not guilty, they don't bear a grudge against the open Kyrgyz, the trouble is stirred by those coming up from the regions." There are no jobs out there-- and they come looking for jobs in Osh, (NOISE) especially at the bazaar market.

Young people come on buses in the morning and work the whole day at market and many of them drink in the evening and then pick a fight. We are relatives and friends of the local city Kyrgyz. They always explain for me to work with the regional youth, but no one is paying attention to us. (NOISE) That's a couple of reasons why we go to question-- a couple of-- of grounds to question the-- some of these initiatives based on their-- they're misdiagnosed from the conflicts-- (NOISE) cause-- the cause of the conflicts, and also, how they recruit (COUGH) new (UNINTEL). (THROAT CLEARING)

The big question for me is how do you evaluate the programs that are being funded? Because it could be that these criticisms that people have voiced to us are misplaced; it's not necessarily mutually exclusive to blame elites, but also to-- but also, to be a case that the-- non-elites join in racist violence. (COUGH)

Some people spoke positively of these programs, but it's hard to evaluate the success. And so, what I want to do is think of four claims for success and how we might evaluate? Four examples. And the first is that I asked-- a major international donor in Osh to try and persuade me of the success of his projects. And-- and he-- he cited a 2011-12 project, which were 120 students from Osh (UNINTEL) University in summer camps and they were organized through a local partner, Fund for Tolerance International, and they were funded by the U.K.'s Department for International Development.

The students were given tolerance training and projects cycle management, which he explained is identifying and developing a good idea from the start into a formal proposal, and then manage a budget (UNINTEL). The original intention was that these be ethnically mixed.

But the Uzbeks he mentioned made it less than 10% of these projects because they were afraid to participate because of ongoing violence. 40 projects were funded; one of them made posters put up in buses urging people to be tolerant, and another saw students going to schools and doing workshops with the children on tolerance. These came to an end in April of 2012, because unfortunately, critics (UNINTEL) there were funding problems. The organization had said to me, "This worked very well, it was not ambitious, it needed limited resources and we exceeded our objectives, small things often work well."

Now what this means apparently, is that a certain number of people were trained in tolerance, and they're properly-- demonstrated an ability to take project cycle management on a tolerant-related theme. We don't know whether these individuals were already tolerant, whether they became more or less so as a result of these projects, or the impact of the projects, we simply know that a certain amount of money (UNINTEL) the money was spent by a London-based NGO and professional local NGO, training on a certain number of students in certain a certain timeframe. And this is why it was a success.

The second example was (UNINTEL) by the representative by an international organization, again, in answer to your question about whether this was a success. And he spoke about, you know, so-called anti-terror operations in (UNINTEL), a Uzbek village on the edge of Osh, in-- in-- I think it was in July 2010.

And he said this. He said, "Folk in Alike (PH)," these are the-- one of the ethnic Kyrgyz regions that our previous responders referred to, "Folk in Alike come together for a celebration and rumors reach them that the Uzbeks in Osh had started another war. Our mediators, who knew each other by then, had personal contact details, called each other, and were able to clarify what was happening and to defuse tensions.

After calling folk in Alimjon, they-- the Alike mediators went into the streets of Alike, used phones to convey to people the truth. I want to get teams from different districts to go into those regions to make future contacts. (COUGH) And so that future conflicts, like Alike versus Aushamahalitz (PH), become less violent.

Now, we lack sufficient evidence to evaluate this claim. The logic of the argument appears reasonable. But who knows whether a further outbreak of violence would have occurred or not in the absence of these exchanges? Such networks and links can hardly be bad. But would they have been enough to defuse, to deescalate the tensions that occurred in June 2010 and prevent future ones? (COUGH)

We don't know. We don't know. These activities can open new ways to refute rumors (UNINTEL PHRASE). They may be able to make a contribution to preventing further violence. It's difficult to tell on their end, so we haven't known. This leads to a third example, which I'll mention briefly, the example of Uzgen. Uzgen was the town, in 2000, in 1990, where there was-- where the previous incident of mass violence between the Kyrgyz and Uzbeks had begun.

And as, as international donors, claimed that didn't occur in 2010, because mediators had been trained in the past stepped forward and calmed the situation. Again, we don't know. Were these the sort of people-- because people trained as mediators are, generally, already community leaders. Would they have done this anyway, is really unclear.

So at the moment, I'm undertaking some research with some local colleagues to try and (COUGH) look in detail about what actually happened in Uzgen at that time. Without that sort of research, and it's the type of research that this-- these organizations cannot do, we don't really know whether these are successful.

The fourth example, and final one I wanna think about, is-- is that simply having someone listed as a tr-- as a trained mediator is no guarantee that they are having the desired impact. So (UNINTEL) share the same ideological predispositions of donors. So again, I asked. I asked-- one of the donors, "Introduce me to someone who you would regard as a successfully trained mediator."

So he introduced me. And I-- I spent a long time speaking to this woman. She'd gone through OSCE community mediating training programs. And of course, at her own claim, she'd been very successful at it. She trained-- she, first of all, recruit-- trains 22 people and then trained 40 more. (COUGH)

What is required by the donors is that they train individuals who then go on and train other individuals, and so on. So it's a ripple effect. (KNOCKING) These figures, no doubt, feed into the r-- donor reports of success. But the actual impact cannot be discerned from figures alone.

Interestingly and for her, being trained, gave her greater social capacity and authority. As a result of training, she said, she gained confidence and more social esteem. She was elected as the head of her block of flats. They were telling me—she recounted that she-- al-- although previously, she was the sort of person who would go and help people sort out their differences, the training, she said, "Gave me great additional benefit in that it gave me documents and certificates.

"Before, I didn't have these documents. But now I have an excuse to go somewhere. I say I have a reason to come here. And people can't tell me it's none of my business. 'We are mediators,' I say. We've been given authority to go into a conflict situation and call on the people to live in unity so we can protect Kyrgyzstan's integrity, to live well, not to quarrel."

And she-- she summarized the training that she gave the second group of people. "As we got to know each other we got to explain to the ordinary people, to parents, to teachers, (COUGH) calling on them to live on concordance, saying, 'You need to be together to protect the unity of the people.'"

Now, the word she's using-- unity is (SPEAKING KYRGYZ). And concordance is (SPEAKING KYRGYZ) in Kyrgyz. They have a particular place in contemporary Kyrgyz national understanding. Contemporary Kyrgyz—political ideology draws on an idea of the nomadic past.

With the great-- in-- inner Asian tribal confederations, those that survived were those that could create unity between different tribes. And the great Kyrgyz leader Manas who is the main symbol of independence in Kyrgyzstan is held as the-- the leaders of it.

Now, she was using terms that derive from a Kyrgyz national-- nationalist imagining and-- and-- and using them-- as a subst--in a very different way that mediators, that USC was using them. So for example, during the c-- she was actually, a member of a local political party and of-- of a nationalist political party. She was a key supporter

of a chap called Melis Myrzakmatov, who was the mayor of Osh at the time and-- was-- was-- was regarded as something of a firebrand nationalist.

During the course of our interview, she espoused numerous anti-Uzbek prejudices that Uzbeks themselves burn their houses down to make the Kyrgyz look bad, that Uzbeks started the conflict in order to break up Kyrgyzstan, that they gained financially by monopolizing international aid, that their leaders have orchestrated a concerted campaign in international media on the internet to blacken the honor of the Kyrgyzs.

She regards the police mistreatment of Uzbeks as, "Revenge for what they did to us, trying to take our country." And she insisted that, although Uzbeks began it, it wasn't the ordinary people. It was their leaders, therefore demonstrating that blaming leaders is not necessarily-- an alternative to being racist.

Now, how can we evaluate this? We shouldn't judge this woman too harshly. It's difficult for any of us to transcend the interests and prejudices of our social group. Few of us can do that completely. We shouldn't expect a necessarily trained community mediator to do that.

And it may be that the experience of taking part in these mediation and training programs will soften her-- attitude to Uzbeks, and that she'll imbibe some notions of tolerance. On the other hand, it might be that international donors have equipped someone who will use her newfound social and political capital to propagate a nationalist vision of peacemaking and mediation as basically signing up to be ethnic (UNINTEL) of the state.

And it-- it is this nationalist vision, not a liberal OSCE one, that she is imparting and reinforcing in her new generation of community mediators. The international donors have no way of knowing. Whatever the case, she and her 60-plus mediators appear in someone's spreadsheet as evidence of the success of promoting tolerance or mediation in Osh. But it's far from certain that this claim can be justified. The-- the opposite may be the case.

(NOISE) Now, staging reconciliation events in Osh, I think, can have a powerful symbolic value. And it-- it raises critical questions about the future of humanity. Looking (UNINTEL) nation states. And it may be that some individuals who've taken part in these seminars will go on to be great future peacemakers in Kyrgyzstan.

However, we can't find any compelling evidence that mediation, reconciliation, and peacemaking activities led by international donors are useful in conflict management. And there are many reasons to suspect that they may even be counterproductive.

And so to finish, I want to give-- a few summaries and policy recommendations. And the summary is that western donors who have supported peacemaking, mediation, and reconciliation, perhaps, initiated in-- in response to the violence in 2010, these have proliferated, because they are short term. They are low budget. They are easy to initiate through the use of existing partners.

They bypass the local state and, thus, minimize b-- bureaucracy. And they make

great promises and, often, statistical claims of success. It's difficult to evaluate, in part, because of the nature. How could we measure whether a resources such as intercommunal trust is being increased? How could we tell, establish, whether these people (COUGH) help prevent future conflicts is difficult to do. Therefore, I wouldn't positively conclude that these projects lack value.

However, critical questions can be raised about them. Limited research on similar projects in central Asia found that they generally misdiagnose the cause of the conflict. And aid generally has unintended political consequences. A number of recommendations. Some particular recommendations for those working with peacebuilding and mediation, reconciliation programs:

Find ways to prioritize working with the demographic groups directly involved in the perpetrating of violence. Rather that divorcing development from peacebuilding, conflict mediation, reconciliation, should be aimed at young men and go hand in hand with the substantive element of creating economic opportunities for them.

Thirdly, it's necessary to develop more critically reflective and rigorous appraisal mechanisms of the effectiveness of these interventions. I think it might be useful to make long-term commitments to working with key individuals in communities.

I'm gonna finish with a general recommendation. Because tensions have existed between Kyrgyz and Uzbeks in Osh for decades and will continue to exist. However, only on two occasions has this led to massive violence. One was in 1990, June 1990. And one was in 2010. And I think a common factor in both cases was political in spirit.

In 1990, the Soviet Union was unraveling. There was fears about the breakup of Kyrgyzstan and the power vacuum. And this violence occurred. Secondly, in 2010, there was a power vacuum. As Jeff mentioned, Uzbeks fought a revolution in Kyrgyzstan, the overthrow of the corrupt Bakiyev government. And a power vacuum, and again, fear about Kyrgyzstan's future. So in order to-- to help prevent these conflicts, maybe what the outside can do is try and help prevent political instability, which is easier said than done.

But it's alleged that one of the main sources of-- of the Bakiyev clan's corrupt activities was the arrangement of subcontractors to supply fuel to the U.S. airbase in Manas. The airbase was so lucrative that-- that Bakiyev-- to the Bakiyev clan, because of its opaque offshore arrangements, which made siphoning off large sums of corruption easy. And it was the corruption of those Bakiyev regime that led to his (UNINTEL).

Western, and particularly U.K. and U.S., offshoring arrangements continue to facilitate patterns of corruption in Kyrgyzstan. And this makes it more difficult to produce economic and social development that would contribute to stability. There are-- are several areas where E.U. states and particularly the U-- U.K. and U.S., in particular, could do more to tackle our own culpability in creating conditions for corruption and, therefore, social discontent.

We need to work harder to improve anti-money-laundering regime, which will make

corruption less possible. And w-- and-- and-- the corruption obviously fuels political crisis. A Global Witness report in 2012 in Kyrgyzstan recommended that-- which uncovered numerous instances of really quite insidious corruption-- where money was siphoned through nonexistent companies or dead individuals-- registered in U.K., U.S. territories-- recommends that the u-- U.K. and U.S.-- require that the identities of real beneficiaries, all companies should be publically available in the country they are incorporated.

And nominee directors and shareholders should be liable for their (UNINTEL) client's actions. The largest, the most expensive ever, legal case to go through U.K. courts was a (UNINTEL) case about control of resources connected to the (UNINTEL PHRASE).

Western s-- states should do much more to facilitate the recovery of stolen assets and tackle tax relations for our own court and financial systems. So I suppose my-- I started my-- asking what western states can do to mediate conflict in Kyrgyzstan. It might be that conflict prevention actually begins at home. Thank you.

JEFF GOLDSTEIN:

Thank you very much, Nick. I think-- that's a good segue entering-- ending on a question of how political stability and corruption led to conflict, which I think takes us very neatly into Ukraine. So Inna, the floor is yours.

INNA PIDLUSKA:

Okay. So thanks so much. I was just listening to these conclusions. And I was thinking how-- much they are in tune with what I wanted to raise today, although the situation is quite different. As we are talking now-- I was just-- thinking that, a couple of days ago, we made the, again in a different situation, as the military build-up on the Ukrainian border continues. And-- you could read reports-- from-- the OAC. You could hear-- the statements-- the transcript. It's called Ukraine number 26.

I think these days about-- the Minsk agreement (UNINTEL) Russia continue a military build-up. The separatists are trying to capture even more-- territories. So it's not about reconciliation and peacebuilding in Ukraine's case, unfortunately. The key point for us is to think-- if there is any way to stop the military build-up and-- actually stop the fighting, resolve that as, naturally, there is little we could discuss right now.

So-- a little bit of the context of where we are. Jeff mentioned, at the beg-- at the beginning-- that you have got something like over half a million IDPs, so-- the people who are displaced in Lugansk and Donetsk regions-- something like 4,000 lives lost-- military as well as civilians.

About-- 1,700-- 1,717, about that, (NOISE) civilians-- are reported missing. About 600

military people, but also—a few civilians as well-- held-- held as hostages. And hostage trading is a very-- well, I would say kind of a business for the separatists.

So-- the substantial proportion of Donetsk and Lugansk is being held by the separatists. Ukraine rule only controls-- 7% of its territory-- of which about 3% is in Donetsk and Lugansk. Then-- well, another 4% is Crimea. But Crimea is a different story. So we'll-- talk about Donetsk and Lugansk now.

If you do that to the territories which are-- reported liberated or conditionally liberated territories, which are still now controlled-- by the Ukrainian government, it's also-- not-- all absolutely fine and okay and certain there.

So the situation is very volatile. It can change every minute. And the dominant feeling of the people on these territories is fear, naturally. They fear anybody carrying weapons, they fear the separatists to return. They fear Ukrainian armed forces.

They fear shelling. They fear the best-- the-- the—the worst scenarios. They don't trust anybody. And-- they have very little clue (?) and very little-- respect for the Ukrainian government's initiatives-- which they may fear. (NOISE)

Respect for property, for human rights, for human dignity, (NOISE) for human rights is really-- very, very low. And I'm speaking now about the territories which are controlled by the Ukrainian government. What is happening in the territories which are not controlled by Ukraine-- Ukrainian government, we can only speculate.

We do not have people-- with whom we work directly in-- in those territories. Because-- all of those NGOs, civic activists and journalists-- that-- the International (UNINTEL) Foundation, which is part of the OSF, has been supporting them for years-- years.

All of them are no longer there. Because for them, it would be really-- a lot of tragedy-- situation. We still do have-- some reports-- from-- people who-- make their way to those territories. And these reports, unfortunately-- do not create-- very-- very good expectations.

So how all that happened? I was thinking-- about similarities with the Kyrgyz situation. In fact, there were many similarities. There were-- I-- as I mentioned, it's not an ethnic conflict. It's not about-- ethnicity. It's not about land. It's not about-- which of the ethnic groups is superior to the other and which is subordinate.

It's rather a clash of very distinct ideological identities. So you would say-- we would say it's a clash between soviet mentality—a post-soviet mentality and expectations. It's a clash between different historic myths and grievances and perceptions.

It's not limited to support for Maidan and anti-Maidan. I would say it's broader than that. And-- it started before the Maidan. Historically, and when I say historically, I do mean, like, most of the-- 20th century at least-- there have been different-- historic her-- heroes and different perceptions of-- what is-- glory and what is-- the opposite in-- the people living in the east of Ukraine and many people living in the west of Ukraine.

But that didn't actively lead to fighting before. I mean, they can't-- they could have

different perceptions. They could have seen that-- the boss was feeding the entire Ukraine. And that was a special kind of people with a special kind of virtues. But-- indeed, it-- it didn't-- lead to violence and to clashes.

So what happened-- in the beginning of-- this year? When-- after Maidan—Russia invaded the Crimea, and Ukraine had no strength to resist and-- to protect its territory-- it appears to too many politicians and other local vested interests that-- (UNINTEL PHRASE) would be as easy as-- well, I would say bloodless, as it happened in the Crimea.

But then the situation went out of control. So what we are ha-- having is a combination of-- a succession of corrupt, nondemocratic governments at the national level, at the regional level-- vested interests of very irresponsible politicians who are always happy to play the regional grievances and regional-- prejudices and also a lot of propaganda.

So you might watch it in the media. You could see Russia (UNINTEL) of all sorts of-- stories being told about Ukrainian fascists and so on. You can blame it on the propaganda to a certain extent, though. Because I cannot really see too many victims of this propaganda.

What we see is too many people who were prepared to-- listen to the news-- portraying Ukraine in the-- very bad light and believing it. And well-- so what we have today is, as I mentioned, is-- is currently described as a clash of identities. And this is not just limited to the situation which is now held by the separatists.

So for the purpose of discussing what we could do, I would suggest we talk about those territories and those people (COUGH) who are on Ukraine-controlled territories. These can be people from-- Donetsk and Lugansk regions-- and areas which are held by the separatists.

This can be local people in the rest of Donetsk and Lugansk. But what we see is that-- (UNINTEL) continue. They are not-- resolved. And those people who are on Ukraine-- held territories-- are not necessarily absolutely positive of what they are getting and how-- they can-- they can continue and how they can rebuild a normal life in those territories.

Partly, it's because the government has been not fast enough in reacting to the problems and the grievances (COUGH) of-- the-- as well as of the local population. Because the resources are scarce. The winter is coming.

There's no housing. There's-- n-- there are no jobs. The people really-- feel anxious. And they do not really get from the government the answers of what is being done, what will be done, what they can expect. So that adds to the problems.

There have been efforts from the international community to deliver-- humanitarian assistance to prevent the humanitarian catastrophe in division. Well, these efforts are at the very beginning. It's difficult to estimate-- to ev-- to evaluate them now. Because they are just-- starting to build their presence, starting to plan.

What I can say, on a positive note, is that the donors are aware of-- the problems of

not coordinating well enough at the early stage. And they are also aware that, no great fixes will probably work.

This, unfortunately, is the situation for many years. And it will require a long-lasting commitment and the major financial commitment of whoever chooses to-- participate in-- the-- peacebuilding-- process and also the reconstruction and recovery of the territory.

Civil society-- well, we work with civil society. And we are sure that civil society has a critical role to play. It's possible society has that (UNINTEL). But the government was so slow. By the way, we still do not have a law-- on-- the status of-- eternal displaced persons-- and-- how the government will react and will-- accomodate them and so on.

We have bits and pieces of regulations. We do not have a consolidated budget to address the needs of IDPs and also the territories to which people return. But anyway, so I mentioned the civil society. Civil society and volunteers have done a lot-- to-- help-- the displaced people try to make sure that the grievances between the (UNINTEL) communities and the displaced will (UNINTEL) go very deep.

Because we already are having some-- worrying trends where the scarcity and resources and these new arrivals-- have-- less than nice and peaceful and tolerant relations with the host populations. But civil society cannot carry on-- the entire work itself, of course.

One of the points here which I think is very important is that-- civil society, it's not-- just donor-funded or donor-supported NGOs, which-- do their work well, professionally, and in a systemic way. We are seeing a very interesting phenomenon-- in Ukraine after Maidan, which is the emergence of the grassroots non-organized or non-institutionalized civic initiatives, which self-recognized themselves after the Maidan or during the Maidan, which now try to show solidarity, try to fill in the gaps where the local government is not functioning well. The national government is not functioning.

So this is, I think-- a very important area where a lot of-- effort is still needed. But a lot of hope still-- exists. And-- I think the hope would be materialized if the civil society does not just include volunteers who help others, including the IDPs.

Just to give you an example where I think it's important, a few weeks ago, we organized a conflict proposal for volunteer initiatives, including those helping the IDPs from the conflict-affected areas. We got something like 120 proposals. Only three or four of them came from-- the IDP groups themselves.

What I think is important is really to see how we could-- engage these people, not just in participatory assessments of what they need-- but also in-- doing something for themselves, working directly with international donors and with the government on-- early recovery regeneration-- (UNINTEL) ensuring that there is transparent division or distribution of humanitarian aid, ensuring that there are local democracy tools in place, there is no corruption.

And there is one fundamental thing which all these regions and areas really need. I mentioned earlier there is little trust for-- property and human rights and human-- rights and everything. Human security and human safety remains a huge concern.

How do you engage the local population-- IDPs and the-- host communities as well, in providing for-- security, i.e. protecting themselves? This is a big question and a very important one. There is another one-- where I think-- our attention should lie. And this is about-- addressing the problem of underprivileged-- younger, angry, and active people who-- that having a gun really can serve as a social lift, which they were not having otherwise.

For many of those younger people in the economically destroyed region of Donetsk and Lugansk, having battles would be looking like a solution to a lot of many problems. So local disarmament, transformation of the conflict, and preventing it from-- re-escalating, re-escalation-- that would also-- be an important part.

So-- just to wrap up with a couple more things. Nicholas mentioned about-- having-- donor-supported peacebuilding efforts-- which-- did a lot of good things but didn't really address-- (COUGH) many of-- target-- the main-- let's say risk groups or perpetrators or potential perpetrators of conflict.

This is also one of-- the issues we are now thinking of. We're working directly with-- civil society groups which try to serve as facilitators of dialogue, as mediators or transformers of-- the conflicts in communi-- in communities. But the-- weakness we are seeing so far is that the predominant majority of those-- the interlocutors in this dialogue are the people who are prepared to talk, are the people who were not really-- the troublemakers, who were not-- perpetrating the conflict, whereas, many others who need to be reached out to-- somehow are not engaged in this violence yet.

So how to do that? To be honest, we do not know right now. And if you have some advice on that, we would-- really appreciate it. The necessary further steps-- which I think-- would be important and-- it's, in part, related to-- what I was mentioning before on-- regeneration and-- early generation and-- rebuilding efforts and engaging people in helping themselves.

People need to be-- giving practical things to do. If-- we just go there with-- a roundtable or a seminar on how to be friendly to each other, we probably will not get a lot of attention. And we probably will not help a lot of situ-- in the situation. So-- we think-- that-- such seminars or such discussions could really-- should fall with the practical work.

And that practical work-- can be found-- in engaging people in reconstruction in-- coming together around the local school, which they will first rebuild-- paint-- make sure the roof is there. And then use it as a local core-- place of peace and talking to each other. That probably would be-- well, positive and good experience for-- for-- for the people.

Reconciliation, it's not something which-- we can discuss right now. I mean, reconciliation doesn't happen when the fighting is still going on. As I said earlier, the fighting, unfortunately, will continue. So at this stage, we are talking about--

facilitating dialogues, making sure that people identify for themselves what they need and what they want.

There is still not an agreement-- in many of these (UNINTEL) communities of what kind of future they want for themselves, where they see themselves, and what the next steps should be. Helping them-- have these dialogues, I think-- would be a good entry point, at least for the immediate-- time.

I have two things that-- donors and the government and the civil society will need to address the root causes. The root causes of the problem are the same. And Nicholas mentioned the-- them in a (UNINTEL) speech. I mentioned them earlier. That's corruption, the lack of social lifts-- (THROAT CLEAR) the lack of hope for the population-- unemployment, deprivation, economic devastation.

You name it. There is nothing new in those things. And unless people see that these issues are being addressed, I-- unfortunately, I do not think we will have peace and stability and good relationship, even in a country as relatively homogeneous, in ethnic terms, of-- as Ukraine. I'm done. (LAUGH)

JEFF GOLDSTEIN:

Thank you very much, Inna. I was struck by what you said about the clash of historic myths. My colleague, Michael Hall, who's joining us from New York, and I had the opportunity to visit Osh two months after the conflict. And I think one of the things that struck us both was the extent to which the two communities ended up (?) absolutely different narratives about what had happened, what had caused the violence, who had been responsible.

I'm assuming the same thing is true in Ukraine. And that this actually is going to complicate the efforts of putting it back together again. Because on top of historicness, you then have the question of different narratives and blame casting about the event itself.

But before we open to questions, I wanted to push you. Because your presentation focused on those parts of the Donbass that are still controlled by the Ukrainian government. But that leaves out somewhere in the-- in the vicinity of, what, 3 million people who are-- (COUGH) at least theoretically, citizens of your country.

The government in Kiev has recently said that, (SNEEZE) in essence, they're going to abandon these people to their fate. And while, just to be a little provocative-- certainly, you can understand the idea that-- "Why should we pay, if we don't control it?" or turning to the Russians and saying, essentially, as we do in the United States, "You broke it. You bought it."

But nevertheless, in terms of long-term reconciliation of the country, (COUGH) unless there's no hope of reconciling this part, how does this-- decision of the Ukrainian government to essentially leave this part of the country to its own devices play into long-term reconciliation dynamics?

INNA PIDLUSKA:

Well-- it's actually a very painful question which has been discussed-- quite a lot in Ukraine. And-- (THROAT CLEAR) there is-- well, the simple answer to this-- I can give my personal view on it. And I am lucky I'm not in the Ukrainian government. Because-- in my view, the government, in a way, is using this as a bargaining chip.

It-- wants to put pressure on the region's authorities. It also wants to put pressure on-- the other interlocutors. Basically, what it says-- "We are not paying pensions. We are not paying salaries. We are not taking any responsibility for-- the-- separatist-held territories."

You could see that this is actually quite a big difference from what was initially in this-- recently adopted war on the special arrangement for-- the-- region, the separatist-held region of-- the Donbass, which followed the Minsk agreement and which basically was-- a possibility for the government to have-- to leave some hope and leave some way for-- if not for reconciliation and peace, then for at least some continued dialogue with the-- authorities of the region, which could be elected.

You know, the elections were supposed to take place on the 7th of December under the Ukrainian law. And they were theoretically designed to produce a legitimate local-- government-- which would then be able to be entitled to transfers from the national budget for the needs which-- the local government itself would identify.

So there was a very-- I would say welcoming-- arrangement, which was badly criticized in Ukraine, I have to say, exactly because of this, "Why are we paying them, if we do not control that?" But now, after the-- separatist-held territories had their own elections on the 2nd of November, and-- the Russian Federation already said, "These were the legitimate people to represent the-- territories," I think for-- the Ukrainian government-- little is left in-- in-- except trying to-- use this-- tool of budget support to convince that the local elections still need to happen.

And they need to happen in accordance with the Ukrainian legislation, and that the-- whatever happened in the-- beginning of November, that was not elections. And whatever-- whoever was elected, that's not a legitimate representative and (UNINTEL) to the (UNINTEL).

If you look at the issue and say what it is-- productive for future peacebuilding and whether it will build or create additional grievances, I do not know to what extent it will-- let-- let's say, raise-- the level of satisfaction with the national government. It's, in my view-- a very dangerous decision.

Because it does leave behind a lot of Ukrainian citizens who are in no possibility to leave-- the areas. They cannot relocate for all sorts of reasons. They can be sick, elderly, having no jobs, having no housing, so on and so forth. In a way, I would say that the government has chosen a very risky way. And this definitely does not add to reconciliation. But-- looking at what other ways of doing-- of-- of handling the situation they have, I do not know.

JEFF GOLDSTEIN:

Thank you, Inna. So we have about 20 minutes for questions. Just for logistical ease-- I'd like to ask, does anyone in New York wanna start off with a question?

MICHAEL HALL:

Yes, actually. (LAUGH) So-- so thanks, Jeff, for the opportunity. Thanks, Nick and Inna, both of you, for-- for your presentations. Nick-- a question to you. You know, Jeff is quite right. When-- you know, he-- he mentioned one of the things that really struck us back in 2010, when we were both in Osh, was the-- the divergence in the narratives-- among the two communities about how-- about what happened-- how it happened and-- and who was ultimately responsible, what the root causes were, and so on.

And this is something that-- that remains true, even now, four-- four years on. And obviously, the memories are still very painful and-- and sensitive. And-- and-- on-- on all levels, there's-- of course, one could point to the-- the-- the recent case of the NGO in Osh that attempted to show a film about-- victims of sexual violence-- mostly ethnic Uzbeks-- in Osh, and the-- the-- the out-- the-- the trouble that that got them into.

And I'm wondering, I mean, is it-- is it worth-- are there ways that-- that one could try to-- try to address this issue? This goes somewhat beyond the scope of your report. But I'm wondering, as someone who has spent as-- as much time in Osh as you have-- would you see value, would you see utility in something like-- a truth commission, something that would allow-- sort of an open-- an open kind of airing of-- of-- of-- of grievances as sort of a national debate. Is this something even possible to consider in Kyrgyzstan right now? Or is this completely just crazy?

Secondly, speaking as a donor-- I-- I take-- I-- I take on a lot of the criticisms that you've raised. And these are issues that we grapple with as well. You know, one-- one argument that-- one idea, at least, that-- that we've had is that really, it-- it may not make sense to do specific-- targeted trainings of the kinds that you're talking about, that what-- what's really needed is to-- engage-- through, for instance, the education system-- and-- and raise critical thinking skills, for instance, in general, as kind of a panacea for these sorts of issues.

The-- the idea being that people are more-- you know, the-- that students-- from a very early age, who are trained and encouraged in greater degrees of critical thinking and debate, that they make-- might make them somehow susceptible to provocations, less susceptible to manipulations by political entrepreneurs of various stripes.

And I'm wondering, if-- if in your work, if this was an issue that you-- that you looked at, that you came across, the way in which education, the way in which support for-- critical thinking and debate and education might be something that may have-- an

ameliorative-- re-- or preventive-- preventative effect when it comes to-- to conflict. I'll-- I am-- there's a lot more I could ask of you. I'll stop there for now. It-- it'd be great to hear your thoughts.

NICHOLAS MEGORAN:

Yeah. Thank you. On your second point, yeah. As-- as a teacher and a lecturer, I can only-- agree that teaching the kids to think critically and differently is good. The second-- the main point about two very different narratives is-- is a very good one.

One of the things I've-- I've-- I've done in Osh is I lived between—over time—between Kyrgyz and Uzbek communities. And you can tell two very different stories about Osh as disputed space. I'm a geographer. I'm really interested in how places become imbued with meaning and how we-- we struggle for places.

So if you-- you can tell an Uzbek a story that, historically, Uzbeks lived in the-- the towns and the cities in-- the towns in-- in southern Kyrgyzstan, that they were-- they had the mosques. And they built-- they were artisans and t-- traders, craftsman. And over the time, Kyrgyz m-- migrants, k-- k-- former nomads, moved into the city and took it over. In the soviet times, the soviets wanted to create a Kyrgyz-speaking (UNINTEL). So it wasn't seen that they were-- a foreign power.

Over time, Kyrgyz were-- given political authority and political power. And with independence, they've move in in large numbers. They've taken, and they've pushed Uzbeks out of the bazaars. They've pushed them out of politics. And the violence of 2010 can be seen simply as-- as more of the same, "Violence against us. This is a Kyrgyz takeover of our town."

But from-- the Kyrgyz perspective, you can tell a parallel story. Historically, the Kyrgyz would say, as nomads, they didn't reside in a particular place. But it didn't mean that their ancestors didn't own it, don't you think, or-- or-- or that it wasn't their land. Over time-- the-- the-- the Uzbeks took Kyrgyz land. They lived in the cities. So-- so when the Kyrgyz moved into-- to study at universities and to take positions in banks and government, they found they were unwelcome. The best land, the best homes, the best recreational spaces were owned by Uzbeks.

You (UNINTEL PHRASE) many Kyrgyz politicians, they-- they-- they had to reside, they would say, in—when they were students in Osh. (NOISE) (UNINTEL) they had to reside as a paying tenant to Uzbeks. "We were looked down on." Many Kyrgyz will say when they first came to the city that Uzbeks would look down on them. They're just dirty nomads. They don't need civilization.

And the Uzbeks were speaking their own language rather than Kyrgyz. At the time of independence there was only one Kyrgyz-speaking school in Osh. The rest were Uzbek and Russian. So Kyrgyzstanis had to send their children to schools in which their children couldn't do well at, because they couldn't speak the language. So they were looked down on.

And-- and so you can tell this story from a Kyrgyz perspective. "This is our land, our town. And the Uzbeks are trying to take it over. And 2010 is seen for them as-- a moment of separatism. This was an attempt by Uzbeks to seize this land from us, and have it Uzbekistan."

So you have got these two very different narratives, very different narratives. What can you do about them? I-- I don't think a sort of South Africa style truth (NOISE) committee can be-- be useful at the moment. In South Africa, it worked, because one side clearly won. In-- in Kyrgyzstan, the-- the tensions are still too great. I think something like that would-- would-- would lead to create more violence. But there is-- a third set of narratives that can be told by people who live in Osh. And this is a narrative of Kyrgyz and Uzbeks are sharing space.

When President Bakiyev, who was overthrown, visited Tashkent in 2006, to meet an Uzbek counterpart, he gave a speech saying that the Uzbeks and the Kyrgyz are one. And he switched to speaking Uzbek. He was (UNINTEL) southern Kyrgyz, he could speak Uzbek.

He delighted his hosts, saying, "We share our bazaars and our (UNINTEL)," which are the cemeteries. "We-- we drink the same water. We breathe the same air. We give daughters in marriage. We take daughters in marriage. We share a language, or we share faith."

This is very-- this can be very important discourse, (UNINTEL). In Osh, many of the Kyrgyz and Uzbeks, who-- who lived in Osh and were born there grew up-- p-- possibly, they were in a Russian-speaking school and Russian-speaking classes in university.

They were more Russians than Kyrgyz and Uzbeks and Armenians and Tatars and everyone else who was there. And they have-- a strong sense of being what the Kyrgyz would call themselves (UNINTEL), urban Kyrgyz, not like those people who live in the mountains.

So there is this small narrative that can be told of Osh as shared space. And so my hope is that-- it-- it takes-- it-- it is made easier, as we've heard in Ukraine, for example, in Inna's view. It's very easy for ethnic entrepreneurs to-- to-- to pedal the stories of-- of difference and conflict.

And those can be told. And there's some basis to them. But what I would hope is for-- - is for a generations of new politicians who can turn those-- those other stories, those parallel stories of-- of cooperation, who can translate those into more of a political program. So I think our hope, hope for Osh, isn't about what outsiders do or doesn't do. It's in the-- it's in the visions of local politicians and local leaders.

JEFF GOLDSTEIN:

Can-- can I just push you a little bit on that? Because in your presentation, you had said the problem isn't the people living in Osh. It's the people from rural areas

surrounding Osh who don't participate in this narrative. So how does that-- I mean, wouldn't that make it difficult to-- to-- to--

NICHOLAS MEGORAN:

Yeah, I-- I-- I think that's a new-- that's a new challenge. How do you-- how do you teach this story? You know, the people who-- who come in, rural Kyrgyz who want to come into Osh, they've-- they've not grown up with Uzbeks. The-- the Kyrgyz in Osh grew up hearing Uzbek music in the streets and speaking Uzbek with their friends.

Rural Kyrgyz don't have that background, don't have that. And that's the challenge, I think, to how to incorporate them. I don't know how you can do that. It needs to be done. Otherwise, we're just gonna have-- it's gonna be-- an-- essentially, an-- an ethnocracy in Osh. And Osh is poorer for that.

JEFF GOLDSTEIN:

So let me open the room to questions. Again, if you're at the table-- please speak up here in the back room. My apologies (UNINTEL PHRASE). Please identify yourself. Please.

NELLY OHR:

I'm Nellie Ohr of-- Plessas Experts Network. I-- recently watched a movie. It was actually a Kazak movie. But I think it-- a lot of the phenomena seen there-- correlate to what I've-- seen in my study of Kyrgyzstan. It's called *Harmony Lessons* and-- about some boys in a school where they're taught great things about harmony and about mankind and-- and ideals of peace.

But then the everyday life in the school is that they-- it's in the grip of-- of young thugs who shake down the kids for the benefit of their-- you know, the criminals-- in prison and-- make the lives of these kids intolerable. And certainly, my understanding of Kyrgyzstan is that-- is that the-- the crime-- organized crime roots are powerful.

They form those self-defense organizations that are-- attempt to keep the peace for the benefit of certain people and-- and-- and that the-- some of the 2010 violence was certainly exacerbated, if not initiated by-- you know, the-- the weapons that were brought in by Kyrgyz groups. And so what can be done about that? (LAUGH)

NICHOLAS MEGORAN:

I don't know. I mean, you're right. What can be done? What do you think?

NELLY OHR:

I mean, if there were non-corrupt government officials who would actually prosecute them. It's just a vicious cycle. I don't know.

JANICE HELWIG:

I'm Janice Helwig with-- U.S. Helsinki Commission. And I have two questions, one on Kyrgyzstan and one on Ukraine, both-- OSCE oriented. The first one, on Kyrgyzstan, you've talked a bit about evaluations that you've done of programs going on in-- in the country, including by the OSCE.

And I wonder, do you present your results back to the organizations? Or do we need to somehow-- look at developing-- a mechanism for that? 'Cause I think that kind of feedback would be really good. And on Ukraine-- two questions. The first is, you were mentioning the importance of dialogue.

And I wondered if you were at all familiar with the OSCE's National Dialogue Project that went on in the spring. I think it kind of stopped a bit over the summer and-- and maybe getting going again and if you think that that is or was valuable or would be valuable. And also, if you had any comments on the OSCE's special monitoring mission and its work, particularly in eastern Ukraine. Thanks.

NICHOLAS MEGORAN:

On your first question, my—yes, my purpose in writing these types of reports is that people will see them. I think that it will be very interesting to-- to work with a donor in advance, when a project is planned, to actually plan into that a long-term, deeper evaluation, maybe working with groups like (UNINTEL) and researchers and giving that to some of the staff. That would be a really interesting thing to do. Something to think about in the future.

JEFF GOLDSTEIN:

Inna, do you wanna handle the Ukrainian question, please?

INNA PIDLUSKA:

Yes. Yes. So thanks. First, on the national-- the national dialogue by the OSCE-- while it was a useful format-- it, I think, had its limitations, like any-- big-level, national, thereby ambitious dialogues have. There are always people who feel they have not been included. (LAUGHTER)

It's not possible to include everybody who has a say. And-- you obviously find

somebody who really felt that his or her voice was not heard. It's why we-- when we speak about dialogues-- we would not look at-- this big and formal-- event with preselected participants, who-- then are supposed to, you know, sort of represent some group. But the problem is that, very often, they do not.

And there is no connection between the-- what happened around the table at the national dialogue and-- and what happens down there, in the communities and groups. And-- the whole point of-- having inclusive dialogues is to have them-- let's say, in a way-- where they can engage the people who are here and now in a specific territory, addressing a specific issue in which they can participate and in which they can make a difference for themselves.

This is probably something-- which-- the h-- high-level dialogues-- are not designed to achieve. Because they are political tools. We were thinking about the practical-- things and dialogue as part of understanding between people, confidence building, and basically beginning of some kind of joint work. Because we only-- think that-- joint efforts and-- ability to listen to each other, try to find a compromise.

This is something-- (COUGH) which people need. And they will not get it through just reading in the paper that there was a national dialogue in which-- some elected leaders or some appointed officials participated. On the special monitoring mission-- well, I think-- they are trying to do their best.

Just a couple of days ago, we were reading-- comments from-- people from the special monitoring mission about how difficult it is for them to work in (UNINTEL) and Donetsk and Lugansk. Just take an example of the border control.

You know, Ukraine and Russia have 400 kilometers of border. And the OSCE controls about one kilometer and two checkpoints. (WHISPERING) So the ability of the special monitoring mission is really limited. They do have access to-- the separatist-held territories.

But we were really in complaints about they really do not have the freedom of movement there. They can only be taken where the-- separatists want to take them. And that, by the way, does cause anxiety among the-- many of-- Ukrainians-- working-- on-- on this conflict, many of-- our people-- or a number of people in-- in-- the-- government-held territories of Donetsk and Lugansk.

So-- to just answer your question in a short way, the special monitoring mission is trying to talk to-- all sides and-- be this very important interlocutor. But we should be realistic about what they can do.

JEFF GOLDSTEIN:

Any other questions, please? Well, then let me ask a question. And-- and basically, it draws on-- things that both of you-- have said. Inna, you talked about the importance of trying to work on-- joint projects, like schools-- where there's some common interest. Nick has given-- examples of where this sort of dialogue-- proved

to be rather empty in Kyrgyzstan. So-- I'd just like to ask you to comment a little bit on sort of, specifically, what you have in mind.

And in-- in addition to that, you talked about the-- uncertainty because of the potential for renewed military action. So I wanted to ask-- how you go about trying to do this in the areas on the fringes of the conflict zone, knowing that this may become a conflict zone-- again soon.

And-- and Nick-- for you, on Kyrgyzstan-- Inna had mentioned this idea of-- having a gun being-- an enabler for disenfranchised young men. And I think we saw-- a very similar phenomenon in Osh. I-- I remember distinctly coming down the main road from the mountains. And the destruction would be just along the road, until you got to an Uzbek area.

So my question is, it-- it didn't look like these disenfranchised young men were doing this on their own. (NOISE) It looks like they were being organized and taken advantage of. So what are your thoughts on who the enablers were and also how you attack this nexus of working with them, maybe, is not all the problem. Because left to their own devices, they wouldn't have done this. Inna, please.

INNA PIDLUSKA:

Okay, me first?

JEFF GOLDSTEIN:

Please.

INNA PIDLUSKA:

Let's see. Okay, so yeah. So if-- if I-- if I understood the question correctly, and-- please-- correct me if I didn't. So-- because the situation is so volatile and uncertain, and because the fighting continues-- on the-- in the fringe areas, it might happen that whatever work you do now-- may prove not very useful. Because it may be bombed again or captured again. Is that right?

JEFF GOLDSTEIN:

Yes.

INNA PIDLUSKA:

Well-- you know-- I think that the critical thing here is to make sure that the local population does their best to make sure that the territory is not captured again. And

indeed, we did have examples in Ukraine where the local population resisted really strongly. And they prevented the capture by the separatist forces. And actually, the separatist forces are backed with Russian arms, Russian troops.

I'm speaking about (UNINTEL), for instance, which really resisted strongly. And there was a massive mobilization of-- the people-- to protect themselves. So in the fringe areas, I think the important thing would be to encourage this grassroots self-reliance, which would make it extremely difficult for the separatists to just come there and establish their move.

It happens, by the way-- now and then in all these border towns or border little t-- li-- little border towns in Donetsk and Lugansk region. And-- we think that the more people do for themselves, the more they invest in rebuilding their local school, their local whatever it is, hospital or houses, the more they will be prepared to defend themselves and-- not let the--let them be captured again.

So in a way, it's-- regeneration, livelihood-- community work-- building the sense of sticking together, building the sense of solidarity and self-help and actually keeping people busy, which is quite important in post-conflict situations, which helps people to really transform into this positive thinking about what they could do.

If that is backed with resources, and if there is some government money coming in, or there is some international donor m-- money coming in, people also will have-- possibility to earn their living. And again, this is a very additional thing, which I think is necessary for stabilizing the situation.

JEFF GOLDSTEIN:

Thank you, Inna. Nick, the question of--

NICHOLAS MEGORAN:

Thank you. Obviously, there's no-- wars, violent conflicts don't have a single explanation, a single cause. And so there are-- complicated factors come together and a spark sets them off. And in-- in-- in Kyrgyzstan, in Osh, it-- it-- the violence, after a while, took on the-- the fore (?) of those organized and coordinated.

And I don't think (UNINTEL) thinking about it-- more-- all different reports seem to agree it was-- a confrontation of individuals that quickly spread, as-- as rumors spread. Mobile phones make it very easy. So-- so most people in Osh have got family out in-- in the neighborhoods. They heard about this and moved in.

What's interesting is then how do you-- how do you stop—a guy called Paul Bracks (PH) worked in India on Muslim-Hindu communal rights in-- in India. And he looked at cases where the theft of an idol from a temple or an attack on a mosque or a s-- a murder of a politician would lead to massive violence and other places when-- when it wouldn't.

And he-- he looked at the role of-- of leaders and the authorities (BLOWING NOSE) who stepped in quickly and prevented this escalation. What's interesting was that, in-- in Kyrgyzstan, there was no one to do that. The-- the-- the government was effectively-- it was a power vacuum. There was no one who could do that. There was no one-- initially, it was not-- large, heavily armed groups of people attacking. It was-- it was mobs with a few shotguns. And they should have been able to stop that. And-- and they didn't. And this is a major-- (COUGH) major question.

What is interesting as well, and this is a provocative thought, is that, in Uzbekistan, there was no violence-- against the Kyrgyz minority. What we can seem to see is that the-- the president of Uzbekistan intervened very quickly, sealed off border areas, flooded the areas where Kyrgyz minority live, and made it very clear that any attacks by Uzbeks in retaliation would be treated severely.

So think-- I think this raises very difficult questions for communities of outsiders like ourselves. Who have promoted democratization. Ultimately, it was-- the pseud-democracy of Kyrgyzstan destabilized through corruption that was (UNINTEL) that was allowed through western money and offshoring was unable to contain its violence. And the-- the authoritarian regime of Uzbekistan was able to contain it. And that raises some questions.

JEFF GOLDSTEIN:

Yeah, although I would have to say, since more people were killed in Andijan than in Osh, it maybe indicates that it's not really-- that authoritarian stability is not the answer, certainly, either.

NICHOLAS MEGORAN:

It's-- it's not-- it's not a long term answer. But nor is the pseudo-democracy of Kyrgyzstan.

JEFF GOLDSTEIN:

I will-- I will argue that, in Kyrgyzstan, it was the lack of a functioning government that made this more of an issue. But thank you all for coming. And I hope you'll join me in thanking-- both Inna-- and Nick for-- coming and sharing-- their views with us. (APPLAUSE)

* * *END OF TRANSCRIPT* * *