

Kremlin appoints a representative for relations with Kyrgyzstan

On 13 May, President Dmitri Medvedev appointed General Vladimir Rushailo to the position of special representative for relations with Kyrgyzstan. Next day, Rushailo paid his first visit to Bishkek. The creation of this position gives Moscow a strong instrument for an active policy in crisis-hit Kyrgyzstan.

General Vladimir Rushailo, who in the past was head of the Russian Interior Ministry, secretary of the Security Council and the head of the Executive Committee of the CIS, is to represent Moscow in its contacts with the interim government in Bishkek and the Kyrgyz opposition; to conduct consultations concerning the stabilisation of the situation in the country; monitor the development of events, and report back to the president. His new responsibilities include 'coordinating the activities of representatives of Russia who are present in Kyrgyzstan' (he will thus supervise the work not only of diplomats, but also, it must be assumed, the representatives of the Russian military and security institutions who have been delegated to that country), and also serving as a link between the governments of Russia and Kyrgyzstan.

Russia adopted a favourable attitude towards the coup which took place in Kyrgyzstan at the beginning of April. However the new government's most recent declarations, including the statement that the American base at Manas airfield will remain there, have caused concern in the Kremlin. On one hand, Moscow is offering much needed aid to Kyrgyzstan, while on the other it suggests the possibility of introducing greater number of its soldiers into the country; by these means, Moscow is trying to guarantee its interests in that country and Central Asia as a whole. Rushailo himself is supposed to be the direct executor of this policy. <GOR>