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**Kyrgyzstan: After the revolution, worries about the economy, corruption;
established news sources largely unchallenged;**

Islamic extremism not a factor

WASHINGTON, D.C. – Global media research institute **InterMedia** today released findings from a major new post-revolution survey of 1,000 Kyrgyz. Besides providing insight into the news-gathering habits of Kyrgyz before and after the recent Tulip Revolution, the survey offers a unique glimpse into what citizens of the strategically important country think about other issues—the country’s future in the revolution’s aftermath, July’s upcoming general elections and the United States.

Limited sources for news; growing skepticism

Most respondents get their news from TV but don’t believe everything they see. The growth of independent news sources has been slow and sporadic in Kyrgyzstan, so most people received their news updates—both during and after the revolution—from Kyrgyz state-run KTR TV and the Russian-owned ORT network (84 percent and 81 percent, respectively). InterMedia survey data from the past several years indicates a slight downward trend in the level of trust Kyrgyz have for the two broadcasters. Nonetheless, a majority of those surveyed said they thought the two most popular networks were still ‘somewhat’ or ‘very’ trustworthy (for KTR, 74 percent; for ORT, 86 percent).

“Analyzing the data, it seems there is slight but mounting skepticism among Kyrgyz citizens about their news sources, perhaps in response to recent events,” says Marjorie Winfrey, InterMedia’s Central Asian project manager and point person for the Kyrgyzstan survey. “For years, KTR was seen as a tool of the state and of Kyrgyz leader Askar Akaev. Similarly, ORT has traditionally been seen by the Kyrgyz as very pro-government. Despite that, the survey data tells us that people watch these two networks, generally believing the coverage they receive.”

(Ms. Winfrey is based in Washington, D.C., and will be available to the media between May 3 and 6. She will be in Bishkek conducting additional surveys from May 8 until the Kyrgyzstan national election on July 10. While there, she will be available to reporters filing stories on the election or on the evolving situation in the country.)

As a catalyst for the revolution, respondents say Islamic extremism ranks low; economic conditions, foreign interference played larger role

Kyrgyz do not share Western concerns that a rise in Islamic extremism in Central Asia may have contributed to their country's turmoil—only 0.2 percent believe fundamentalism was at the root of the revolution. Instead, Kyrgyz respondents cited economic conditions and corruption as leading causes, and say the economy continues to be their number one concern.

At the same time, 41 percent of those interviewed think foreign entities interfered in their country's affairs, with the United States topping the list. The U.S.'s image in Kyrgyzstan has eroded since the terrorist attacks of 9/11, at which time 65 percent held the country in high regard. Today, approximately 47 percent said they are somewhat or very favorably inclined towards the United States. The U.S.'s popularity lags considerably behind that of Russia, which is viewed favorably by nearly 92 percent of those interviewed.

Another key finding of the survey, conducted April 6-14 in the capital, Bishkek, and in other centers in the country, found a majority of respondents (61 percent) were pleased to see current interim president Kurmanbek Bakiev replace the ousted Askar Akaev and believe there should be new parliamentary elections (64 percent). However, if elections had been held at the time of the survey, rival candidate Feliks Kulov would have placed slightly ahead of interim leader Bakiev (40 percent to 35 percent).

“There are some encouraging signs we can take away from the survey,” said Winfrey. “People are understandably concerned about immediate economic issues, but the vast majority of Kyrgyz do not support the means or aims of Islamic extremists, nor do they think they were a cause of the revolution. More than half of respondents also believe the political future of their country will be more democratic, which is good news.”

Based in Washington, D.C., and London, U.K., **InterMedia** is a global leader in media, audience and public attitude research and communications solutions. Active in more than 120 countries worldwide and specializing in the developing world, InterMedia fuses regional expertise and a vast network of local contacts with high-quality, scientifically-based methodologies.

Survey note: InterMedia surveyed 1,000 adults 15 and older 6-14 April in Bishkek, Osh and Jalal-Abad. Range of error with a 95 percent confidence interval is +/- 3 percent.