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## Revolutions in ex Soviet republics have not failed or succeeded.

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The scenes from Kiev and Bishkek are unsettlingly familiar: thousands of demonstrators crowding the central squares of the capitals of Ukraine and Kyrgyzstan, waving banners and shouting demands.

Less than three years ago, similar protests helped propel reformist politicians into both countries' presidencies, raising hopes that democratic movements across the former Soviet Union would triumph over regimes marked by corruption, stagnation and manipulated elections. The future, briefly, seemed as bright as the cheery names the demonstrators adopted - Ukraine's Orange Revolution, Kyrgyzstan's Tulip Revolution.

But within a few months both countries were mired in political crises that seemed to recur like a case of malaria - a raging fever, some relief, and another case of the chills and the sweats. The only difference this time, perhaps, is that the presidents who came to power after the revolutions are themselves in jeopardy.

Georgia, whose Rose Revolution of 2003 was the first of the so-called "color revolutions," has not seen mass protests like Ukraine's and Kyrgyzstan's. But even there, disappointment and dissatisfaction are brewing.

Analysts, though, aren't ready to call any of them outright failures. And in Russia some watch the turmoil with longing, saying the clash of opposing forces in those nations is preferable to their own country's gray, grim stability.

(<http://www.iht.com/articles/2007/04/15/news/germany.php>)

Kyrgyzstan's revolution came after Georgia's and Ukraine's, and its honeymoon period was the shortest.

Kurmanbek Bakiyev became acting president in March 2005, after a mob of demonstrators drove President Askar Akayev into exile. Three months later, thousands stormed the government headquarters to protest the disqualification of a presidential candidate.

Protests broke out again in the months after Bakiyev was elected in what Western observers called the most free and fair election ever held in former Soviet Central Asia, and tensions since then have only increased.

Michael Hall, an analyst in Bishkek for the International Crisis Group, said much of the dissatisfaction stemmed from Bakiyev's efforts to strengthen the presidency, partly driven by how easily Akayev was driven out. "He wanted to ensure the same thing didn't happen to him," Hall said.

But Bakiyev also was saddled with a particularly contentious parliament - 80% the body whose election had sparked the March protests. The bold legislature, power struggles between the country's southern and northern clans and Bakiyev's inability to rein in corruption and bolster the economy all have kept Kyrgyzstan in a state of political turmoil.

But Hall said Bakiyev's recent concessions to curb his own power and his appointment of an opposition figure as prime minister could eventually mollify his critics.

Although Ukraine also has a bumptious parliament, its presidency is relatively weak. That left the country in a chronic power struggle between the executive and legislative branches.

The parliamentary majority consists of opposition politicians who won their seats a year ago in elections dominated by disappointment in President Viktor

Yushchenko's inability to implement reforms.

The current protests broke out after Yushchenko ordered parliament dissolved, claiming his legislative foes were trying to usurp power. The Constitutional Court is to rule on the order's validity.

Ukraine's crisis isn't proof the Orange Revolution failed, said Steve Pifer, a former U.S. Ambassador to Ukraine, now an analyst with the Center for Strategic and International Studies.

"What you have is hardball politics, but it's still essentially democratic ... a fight between the democratically elected president and the parliamentary

majority that was chosen in democratic elections," he said.

However, Yushchenko remains in a delicate position. New elections would likely swell the ranks of the opposition in parliament, recent polls indicate; if the court rules his order was unconstitutional, the parliament likely would try to impeach him.

Georgia has not seen large scale protests since its 2003 Rose Revolution despite hardships created by economic reforms and a growing gap between rich and poor.

The country voted in a new parliament just two months after Mikhail Saakashvili was elected president - while post-revolution optimism was still high - and the body is dominated by his supporters. Georgia's comparative political stability is also bolstered by concern about neighboring Russia, said Soso Tsintsadze of the independent Diplomatic Academy.

"One factor unifying the population of Georgia is the fact that Russia has stood and stands for conflict in Abkhazia and South Ossetia," two separatist regions inside Georgia's borders, Tsintisadze said.

For all the problems afflicting the post-revolution countries, they still look good to some in Russia, where opposition forces are increasingly marginalized.

"Oh, how I envy our neighbor," commentator Boris Vishnevsky wrote of Ukraine in the newspaper Novaya Gazeta. "They have a vibrant life and movement toward the future, despite mistakes and stupidity. "

Jim Heintz, The Associated Press' Moscow news editor, covered the "color revolutions" and their aftermaths in 2003-2005.

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