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PRESIDENCY

Name your successor?

For some reason, as yet unclear, the race for succession in the Kremlin has started remarkably early. Last week, Sergei Ivanov and Dmitri Medvedev—two prime contenders for the throne—had their job descriptions tweaked a bit (actually Medvedev had his clipped), and now analysis focuses on the president's sly nomination of two successors. Two successors? A leader who appoints two successors doesn't really think he can be replaced. And that may be the real point.

As for the new jobs: Medvedev has been exiled from the Kremlin to the White House, where he will assume the revived "First Deputy Prime Minister" position. If he is truly to be the chosen successor, then this would be his "Prime Minister in-training" phase. Of course, he would also be a prime target for Fradkov and every other politically ambitious denizen of the White House. Perhaps it is a test—a trial by fire; or perhaps Putin simply is fed up with Medvedev's presence in his Kremlin office every day. Either way, Medvedev has lost his access and his administrative "tail." He claims that he will be continue in his role at Gazprom's Board of Directors, but time will tell. (1)

Sergei Ivanov, Minister of Defense and Putin pal, has seen his titles augmented with the rank of Deputy Prime Minister. Ivanov, and his coterie, are clever operatives and decided to evacuate Moscow for a tour of the regions, specifically of defense enterprises (suggesting he is "touching base" with an important constituent and contributor base—the arms industry) shortly after the
announcement. (2) The space and time allotted to this trip gives his friends and enemies alike the time to scheme—and gives Ivanov time to plan his response to the new circumstances.

If accommodations speak volumes about relative position within the Russian executive, then the allocation of office space for the new White House officials leaves plenty of grist for the mill: Medvedev will take over a suite of offices on the sixth floor, previously reserved for Putin's reformer extraordinaire, Dmitri Kozak (who, of course, has since been dispatched to the Southern Federal District); Medvedev's First Deputy Prime Minister office will have convenient access to the Government's Chief of Staff, Sergei Naryshkin, which means that they will have an easier time keeping an eye on each other. Sergei Ivanov has been given a "Guest" office on the fifth floor of the White House—one previously reserved for Duma Chair Boris Gryzlov, in case he had to "do some paperwork" while at the government offices. (3)

And in other news Étwo more appointments

Left somewhat under-analyzed in the frenzy of successor chats are the appointments of Sergei Sobyanin to Medvedev's seat as Kremlin Chief of Staff (did Viktor Ivanov, Igor Sechin, et al. just lose out again or are they not quite Chief of Staff material?), and Sergei Kiriyenko's move to Rosatom.

Sergei Sobyanin, Governor of (oil-rich) Tyumen, Putin's former Plenipotentiary Representative in the Urals Federal District, and former Federation Council member gains significant access to the president (and even more crucially, control of the access of others) as the new Kremlin Chief of Staff. Sobyanin is an interesting choice, being neither St. Petersburger nor one of the siloviki. He is, and clearly will be in the Kremlin, an outsider, which makes his appointment a bit of particularly good fortune for those who will need to guide him (and therefore Putin) for his first few months in the job. Perhaps one of his deputies deserves more credit for "big picture" thinking than he normally receives.
While an outsider in the Kremlin schemata, Sobyanin has been a fairly high-profile politician for years, and has, of course, accumulated some very powerful friends, not least among them the oligarch-Governor of Chukot Autonomous District, Roman Abramovich, who helped get Sobyanin elected Speaker of the Khanty-Mansiisk legislature and, through Sibneft, supported Sobyanin's run for Governor of Tyumen in 2001. Abramovich, who has seemed slighted in recent Kremlin oil and gas deals, may not be so remote from presidential favor as was believed and having a friend in the President's front office can't hurt.

As for his Sobyanin's political views, Anatoli Chubais evaluates him as "similar in style" to Putin: "He is not radical, he is moderately democratic, he is measured, unhurried, sensible. It is a combination of qualities that makes him blend in." It certainly doesn't sound like he'll upstage his boss.

Sergei Kiriyenko seems an odd choice for Rosatom. Although the longtime Presidential Envoy to the Volga Federal District also has headed the State Commission for Chemical Disarmament since 2001, Kiriyenko lacks the experience in nuclear physics or engineering that predecessors Yevgeni Adamov or Aleksandr Rumyantsev had in the position.

It is possible that Kiriyenko was parachuted out of his Envoy position and found a comfortable landing at Rosatom, or that his western-oriented, economic-reforming reputation might be an appreciated salve at an agency roiling US-Russian relations over the Iranian nuclear situation. With the focus of the Russian-Iranian nuclear relationship shifting to contingent arms deals however, and with the arrest and extradition fight of Adamov, it might be the case that the political leadership is hoping to see Rosatom shrink back from the international spotlight. Kiriyenko might be just the sort of leader to temper the hot nationalism of previous Atomic Energy administrations and replace it with a cool-headed economic mission.
Kiriyenko apparently has been tasked with a reorganization of Rosatom, separating a civilian nuclear power sector from its predominant military missions. (7) Former Atomic Minister Viktor Mikhailov (an early proponent of the Iranian deal) claimed that he discussed restructuring plans with Kiriyenko, but did not see the utility or feasibility of separating out a uniquely military use. The plans are likely to include the creation of a separate entity to address energy creation concerns. (8)

Apparently, President Putin's much-discussed reassertion of the "power vertical" is revealing a redundancy in the positions of the super-region presidential plenipotentiary representatives. As this once-vaunted administrative reform is left by the wayside, debate focuses on the relative strength and clout of the remaining representatives, making more executive appointments and restructuring a strong possibility.

Source Notes:
(1) ITAR-TASS, 27 Nov 05; FBIS Transcribed Text via World News Connection (WNC). Medvedev announced, apparently unprompted, that he would stay with Gazprom.
(2) "Sergei Ivanov Attacks," Center for Current Political Research (CCPR), 29 Nov 05 via ISI Emerging Markets Database.
(3) Moskovsky komsomolets, 16 Nov 05; BBC Monitoring, 1 Dec 05 via Lexis-Nexis.
(4) "The Unexpected Sobyanin," Moskovsky komsomolets, No. 260, 16 Nov 05; What the Papers Say (WPS) via Lexis-Nexis.
(5) "Russian power grid boss critical of Putin's economic policy," Ekho Moskvy in Russian, 1704 GMT, 19 Nov 05; BBC Monitoring via ISI Emerging Markets Database.
Russian Federation: Security Services

By John Kafer

Nurgaliyev’s fight against corruption

Over the past several months Russia’s Minister of Internal Affairs (MVD), Rashid Nurgaliyev, appears to be taking much more of a look at his own cadres in his fight against corruption. Previously, his press statements focused on the ministry’s successes in combating crime and corruption in other organizations; his March report to legislators lauded the MVD’s capture of more corrupt officials taking bribes, prevention of money laundering incidents, and confiscation of illicit drugs. (1) Over the past several months, however, his remarks have focused on the internal corruption within his police units.

In August, Nurgaliyev made unannounced inspections of police departments in several regions and referred to the “violations of the law” and “absolute immorality” he found. (2) This was one of the few times the police has been chastised openly by its minister. Nurgaliyev followed his remarks by issuing special orders that amount to a new “Police Code of Conduct.” He commanded the police to be understanding and polite, to abide by the law, and not to harass citizens with unnecessary interrogations. As a root cause of the problem, he criticized the police as poorly educated, particularly in the basic principles of civilized culture. (3)
In September, Nurgaliyev responded to reports indicating that the population is far more afraid of police and security forces than of criminal organizations by agreeing that MVD staffers’ disregard of their official duties breeds much police corruption. He provided other objective reasons for MVD corruption, including police not having enough training and expertise and their fraternizing with criminals. In an open letter published on the department’s web site, Nurgaliyev criticized the low moral standards of MVD staffers, their callousness and rudeness in dealing with citizens, police using their internal affairs work to get rich unlawfully, and police collusion with criminals.

On 26 October, Nurgaliyev spoke in the Kurgan town of Shadrinsk during a visit to police precincts in the region, a visit apparently prompted by his lack of trust in reports received from senior officers there. During his speech, he called the level of police work “catastrophic” and “rife with violations” and stated that police officers boost crime-solving rates by manipulating statistics. Furthermore, Nurgaliyev stated that the MVD witnessed a 41% increase in crimes and violations by police officers in the January to September period, compared to the same period last year.

Finally, Nurgaliyev used the 10 November annual “Police Day” to criticize police inefficiency and to exhort the officers to do more to win the trust of the people. The Chairman of the Duma’s Security Committee, Vladimir Vasilyev, also acknowledged that the public had little respect for police authority due, in part, to widespread corruption. He called for an overhaul of the police to make them leaner and more professional.

An internal look certainly is warranted. Recent statistics indicate 38% of the population is more fearful of the police than of any other profession. However, Nurgaliyev’s introspective criticism is rather new. Has police corruption reached such epidemic proportions that even he, as a former Federal
Security Service (FSB) officer, feels compelled to act or is something else motivating him?

Nurgaliyev, along with heads of the other security ministries, has been criticized for weak leadership and lack of control over their ministries. Nurgaliyev may be trying to accomplish real reform, or he may be trying to distance himself from MVD failures and the indignation of his FSB colleagues. Perhaps, as a former FSB officer, his lack of MVD allegiance enables him to act more boldly than would a career MVD officer. In either case, his efforts are noteworthy, but his own statistics indicate police corruption is getting worse, not diminishing.

Although corruption within the MVD arguably is worse than elsewhere, the FSB cannot be far behind. Their brutal, unprofessional, and corrupt conduct in Beslan, Nalchik, and throughout the Caucasus bears witness to that fact. Indeed, corruption permeates all of Russian society. By Nurgaliyev's own admission, corruption has "turned from a local threat into a dangerous transnational phenomenon." (10) Anti-corruption efforts within a single ministry will have little impact; Russia needs similar efforts within the other security ministries and elsewhere throughout its government.

In contrast to Nurgaliyev's internal look at MVD corruption, FSB leader Patrushev barely mentioned corruption within his FSB when talking about the need to wage a universal struggle against corruption. (11) If indeed Nurgaliyev is publicly critical of his own ministry because he is a relative outsider, perhaps a career MVD officer could lead the FSB and take a similar approach. However, with ex-FSB officers currently running all the power ministries and Ivanov now a deputy prime minister as well, don't hold your breath.

**North Ossetia Parliamentary Commission on Beslan**

Stanislav Kesayev, Chairman of the North Ossetia Commission investigating the 2004 Beslan school hostage tragedy, summarized the commission's results
during a recent speech. (12) Previously, investigation announcements seemed to support many of the arguments made by the local Beslan investigators (including the Beslan Mother’s Committee) while contradicting much of the federal Duma’s Torshin Commission investigation. (13) While Kesayev’s investigation remained critical of the slow, poorly coordinated response by Russian security forces, he minimized many previously critical actions of federal authorities while not addressing others.

Just a few months ago, Kesayev criticized federal investigators on several issues. (14) In contrast, his recent summary did not address the question of how weapons were brought to the school, did not confirm that authorities had advance information about the impending hostage situation, and did not address the conduct of security forces during and after the crisis (including command and control questions, the use of tanks, and lack of protection of the investigation site). Furthermore, Kesayev’s investigation did not name persons responsible for the poor response, much to the disappointment of Beslan locals.

The previous animosity between federal investigators and Kesayev’s North Ossetia investigation seems to have subsided as well. In addition to Kesayev’s earlier comments on the “superficial federal investigation,” the Beslan Mother’s Committee remained dissatisfied with the progress of the federal investigation and repeatedly called for the resignation of Nikolai Shepel, the Deputy Prosecutor-General for the Southern Federal District. (15) Likewise, in June, Shepel described Kesayev as “shameless” and his commission as “illegitimate.” (16) With a turn of the tides, Kesayev reported during his speech that Shepel, that morning, wished him luck and stated that “we are doing the same work.” (17) In a TV interview, the chairman of the Duma’s commission investigating Beslan, Aleksandr Torshin commended Kesayev for getting at the truth and now agreed there may have been more than 32 terrorists (a previous point of dispute between the investigations). (18)
The reason for Kesayev’s apparent about-face is unclear, but according to one report the sides “reached agreement and cut all the sharp corners” in the interests of the Republic. Reportedly, the agreement was reached after the involvement of Taimuraz Mansurov, the head of North Ossetia, and Dmitri Kozak, President Putin’s envoy to the Southern Federal District. (19) The Torshin commission is expected to release its results sometime after 20 December.

Source Notes:

(1) “Mironov and Nurgaliyev Exchanged Caustic Remarks” by Irina Romancheva, Moscow Nezavisimaya gazeta, 29 Mar 05; FBIS Translated Text via WNC.
(2) “Russian Police-ÔTo Protect and to Serve?” by Vasili Kononenko, RIA Novosti, 1 Sep 05 via ISI Emerging Markets.
(3) Ibid.
(4) “Criticism With Unchanged Content,” Gazeta.ru, 13 Sep 05; FBIS Translated Text via WNC.
(5) Ibid.
(8) Ibid.
(9) “Russian Police-ÔTo Protect and to Serve?” Ibid.
(10) “Russia, Politics, Officials, Corruption” by Vasili Kononenko, RIA Novosti, 3 Oct 05 via ISI Emerging Markets.
(12) “Beslan Report Was Heard Differently than It Was Written,” by Zaur Farniev, Vladikavka, Kommersant, 30 Nov 05 via JRL #9208.
Russian Federation: Foreign Relations

By Marisa Payne

Russia and the G8
Rampant corruption, a shaky economy and indications of moves in an authoritarian direction have weakened Russia’s international position. However, Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov and Deputy Finance Minister Sergei Storchak claim that next year’s Group of Eight (G8) summit in St. Petersburg will boost Russia’s status.

Storchak contends that Russia eventually will become a full member of the G8, but claims Russia would not push the issue: “It’s a normal process, no one is planning to force it.” (1) The deputy finance minister is being diplomatic, but in reality, his statement is irrelevant: Even if Russia wanted to, it could not enforce full membership in the G8. Until Russia becomes a member of the WTO, its chances of becoming a full G8 member remain remote.

Despite Russia’s obvious shortcomings compared to the other members of the G8, Lavrov extolled Russia’s position on the world scene: “Russia has become
a constant in the international arena. He thinks that the summit in 2006 will demonstrate what he believes is Russia’s international strength: a consistent and predictable foreign policy. (2)

**Russia, Iran and the world**

Despite hopes of becoming a full member of the G8 and WTO, Russia continues to irritate the United States and many European countries with its provocative policy regarding Iran. The latest agreement, which stipulates that Russia will sell Iran anti-air missiles (against low flying missiles and aircraft) is causing many Western diplomatic and security leaders major concern. The deal appears intended to secure Iran’s putative nuclear weapons arsenal.

The one billion dollar agreement with Iran, signed on December 2, coincided with a visit to Moscow by R. Nicholas Burns, the US Under Secretary of State for political affairs. In a radio interview on Echo Moskvy, Burns demanded that Russia’s Foreign Ministry explain the arms deal, expressing his concern regarding Iran’s real purpose for obtaining these missiles. (3)

“For 25 years, Iran has supported terrorists in the Middle East, and that is why we have very bad relations with them. You can understand why we do not support the sales of weapons,” Burns said. (4)

A spokesperson for the Russian Foreign Ministry defended the deal as being: “In full conformity with our international obligations, including in the sphere of nonproliferation.” (5)

However, the transaction has to be viewed in the context of Russian-Western friction regarding Russia’s role concerning putative nuclear proliferation in Iran.

“We believe Russia is a country that has influence over Iran, and we want Iran to return to negotiations,” Burns noted. (6) However, while Russian leaders have
expressed agreement with the United States and Europe that Iran should not have nuclear weapons, Russia continues to provide nuclear materials to Iran. The agreement between Russia and Iran does contain a stipulation stating that the nuclear material is only to be used for energy needs, but without a clear means of enforcement of that clause, there is substantial cause for worry still exists.

Secretary of Iran’s High Council of National Security, Ali Larijani, claimed that "...This is not the first time we have bought an anti-missile system. We also make them ourselves." (7)

Larijani’s statement is misleading. While Iran produces their own surface-to-surface missiles, specifically the Mushak and Fateh series, the country is not known to produce any surface-to-air missiles. (8) Moreover, the act of buying surface-to-air missiles is not what is upsetting to the international community. It is the type of missiles sold that makes this deal especially controversial.

Russia has agreed to sell Iran anti-air missiles against low flying missiles and aircraft, that can fly under the radar, thus attacking nuclear facilities. The deal is troubling, especially at a time when Iran is planning to continue its nuclear enrichment work regardless of what the US or the Europeans want.

Larijani has stated that nuclear enrichment work would start “within a few months.”

“...This is not up for negotiation, and the when and how of a resumption concerns us alone,” Larijani said, (9) claiming that Iran is “ready to give guarantees” that it will not make nuclear weapons. (10) However, “ready to give guarantees” is not the same as actually giving guarantees and the issue of whether Russia is willing to regulate the nuclear production of a close ally in order to please the international community is debatable.
Russian press predictably defends Putin

Sergei Zemyanoi, a doctoral student of philosophy, claims Russia faces a choice between either becoming a sovereign power or once again becoming an empire. The article, which was published in Politichesky zhurnal, contends that the United States is making it hard for Russia to take the first path because of the WestÕs Òanti-Putin campaign.Ó (11)

Zemlyanoi tries hard to establish that there is a viable force inside of Russia to take on Putin and his United Russia party. The problem with this article is that there is no real opposition to Putin. While there are extremists who clamor for a return to Cold War style politics or even to a Tsarist empire, these parties, led by compromised figures, such as Edvard Limonov and Vladimir Zhirinovsky, are hardly viable contenders in Russia today, where the presidentÕs approval ratings constantly hover around 70 percent.

The ÒRussia at the CrossroadsÓ approach to foreign policy analysis, as set out by Zemlyanoi, is viewed more as comedy (tragic though it may be), especially by RussiaÕs neighbors, such as Georgia and Ukraine, than as serious political discourse.

Source Notes:

(1) Reuters, 3 Dec 05 via JohnsonÕs Russia List (JRL) #9311, Dec. 3, 2005.
(2) RIA Novosti, 28 Nov 05 via ISI Emerging Markets.
(3) ÒRussia to Sell Anti-Aircraft Missiles to Iran in Billion Dollar DealÓ by Andrew Kramer. New York Times, 3 Dec 05.
(4) Ibid.
(6) ÒRussia to Sell Anti-Aircraft Missiles to Iran in Billion Dollar DealÓ by Andrew Kramer. New York Times, 3 Dec 05.
Russian Federation: Domestic Issues and Legislative Branch

By Robyn Angley

Moscow elections

The elections to the newly restructured Moscow city Duma were dominated by United Russia, which won 28 out of 35 seats. United Russia, which has the support of the President and whose ticket was led by Moscow Mayor Yuri Luzkhov, won 13 out of 20 seats elected by party lists and all 15 of the single-mandate seats. The Communist Party, which was not represented in the last Duma (elected in 2001), received 17 percent of the vote and will hold four seats in the new Duma. Yabloko, the liberal democratic party cobbled together from Yabloko and Union of Right Forces (SPS), earned 11 percent of the vote, proving that it could woo a constituency despite internal haggling. (1) However, Moscow in the halcyon days after the USSRÕs implosion had been the democratic stronghold. The other parties and factions that contested the election but failed to pass the 10 percent threshold for representation in the city Duma included the Liberal Democratic Party (LDPR), Party of Life, the Green party, Free Russia, Party of Social Justice and PeopleÕs Will. The Russian Election Commission
has declared that there were no serious infringements of election law, despite the fact that some members of Yabloko were crying foul. (2)

The previous Moscow Duma was composed of four parties. United Russia held 18 seats, Rodina (Motherland) four seats, Russian Party of Life three seats, and SPS two. The new composition of United Russia 28, Communists four, and Yabloko three, reflects the changing nature of Russian politics and, according to critics, Luzhkov’s attempt to protect his own network before leaving office by securing for them places in the municipal organs. However, there is some speculation that Luzhkov may not leave office after all, but will instead use the United Russia majority in the City Duma to return to his position. (3) The new Moscow Duma will be responsible for appointing the next mayor of Moscow.

A list that did not receive any votes was the Rodina party, which held four seats in the previous Duma. The party’s name was removed from the ballot following charges by the nationalist Liberal Democratic Party that Rodina’s election advertising was inciting ethnic strife. Rodina’s television ad showed two men of non-Slavic descent picking up watermelon rinds and trash from the dirt. A voice over said, “Do you speak any Russian at all?” and was followed by an injunction from party leader Dmitri Rogozin. “Let’s clean up our city. Let’s clear away all the dirt.” (4)

The Moscow Municipal Court ruled on 26 November that Rodina be removed from the elections because of the television ad. Rodina appealed the case to the Supreme Court, but it upheld the decision. The allegations from LDPR reflect the contention between two parties that are using nationalistic appeals to rally the electorate. During the course of the electoral campaign, each party had accused the other of provoking ethnic tension. Of the two, Rodina’s chance of a successful election was the greater prior to its television fiasco. A poll taken by the Levada Center just before the Municipal Court ruling showed that Rodina
could expect support from 15 percent of the respondents. However, Rodina’s support appears to have been picked up the Communists rather than the LDPR.

**Public Chamber, NGOs, and protest**

The bill mandating the re-registration of NGOs and imposing harsher regulations on NGOs that receive foreign funding has caused quite a controversy, both domestically and in the international arena. In the Public Chamber, a body whose stated purpose is to provide societal oversight of state organs in general and the legislature in particular, the bill has led to the Chamber’s first attempt to exercise its rights. Twenty-one of the Chamber’s members have submitted a letter to the Duma requesting that the new bill on NGOs be delayed so the chamber can review it before it is passed.

Ella Pamfilova, head of the Council for Facilitating the Development of Civil Society Institutions and Human Rights, recently met with Putin to discuss the bill. Pamfilova said that the law violates the Russian Constitution as well as Russia’s obligations under international law. She also raised the issue of what impact this bill might have on Russia’s influence in its “near abroad.” She stated that “this draft law would also deal a serious blow to our cooperation with our compatriots abroad, especially in the post-Soviet area. It also contradicts what is a good idea – that of allocating budget funds to support our public organizations [sic] in the neighboring countries.” Putin responded that he would speak to the Duma “to ensure that any measures taken in this area are not to the detriment of civil society in Russia.”

The NGO bill also is affecting Russia’s relationship with the United States. The two countries are engaged in a tit-for-tat squabble over the nature of democracy and the extent to which countries can support NGOs in other nations. The US Congress recently allotted four million dollars for the promotion of democracy in Russia. In response, Russia designated more than $17 million for use in promoting civil society in Russia and its “near abroad.” Now a hefty team of
officials from the US State Department are headed to Moscow. Officially, the purpose of the trip is to discuss counterterrorism, but an anonymous American source cited in Kommersant has mentioned that the conversation will also include the controversial legislation. (7)

**Media report**

Anchorwoman Olga Romanova of Ren-TV was cut from the lineup after stating on Ekho Moskvy that the station’s leadership was exercising restrictive control over the content of her program, Ò24.Ó Romanova claimed that shortly after the Ekho Moskvy interview, she was prevented from entering the station by three security guards. Among the offending pieces that the management withheld from broadcasting was a segment on how Aleksandr Ivanov, son of Defense Minister Sergei Ivanov, was not charged for the death of an aging pedestrian who died as a result of being struck by his vehicle in May. (8) Romanova has handed in her resignation to the television station along with several other employees who had worked on Ò24.Ó (9)

Source Notes:

(1) ÒThree parties win Moscow Duma mandates,Ó 5 Dec 05, ITAR-TASS via Lexis-Nexis.
(2) ÒYabloko party reports abuses in Moscow elections,Ó 5 Dec 05, Interfax; FBIS Transcribed Text via WNC.
(3) ÒYuri Luzhkov: Muscovites have made their choice,” 6 Dec 05, Rossiyskaya gazeta; FBIS Translated Text via WNC.
(4) ÒRodina party in last ditch appeal before 4 December polls,Ó 1 Dec 05, ITAR-TASS; FBIS Transcribed Text via WNC.
INTERNAL

The plight of the space program
Russia’s military and civilian space capability continues to deteriorate as highlighted by a series of failed launches and the recent firing of a senior space agency official. In June, a critical military communications satellite was lost shortly after launch. The Molniya-M communications satellite was launched from the Plesetsk military space center; unfortunately, the rocket crashed in its sixth minute of flight. (1) After an investigation, the Space Forces attributed the most likely cause of the crash to a second stage engine failure. (2) This was followed the next day by another unsuccessful launch when an experimental US-Russian satellite, the Solar Sail, failed to achieve orbit following launch from a Russian submarine. The rocket was launched effectively from the submarine but the booster shut down prematurely resulting in an unrecoverable loss. (3)

The launch maladies of the Russian space program resurfaced in October with additional failures. The most egregious was the loss of the European Space Agency’s (ESA) CryoSat satellite which was destroyed following the failure of its Russian booster. The $140 million plus satellite was a cornerstone of the ESA’s plan to study global warming. This was also a prime opportunity for Russia’s
beleaguered space industry to accumulate badly needed foreign cash. The Nezavisimaya gazeta lamented, "The scale of losses from that failure is hard to calculate. Accidents like that which happened to CryoSat may irrevocably undermine Western customers' confidence in Russia's delivery vehicles." (4) To make matters worse, an unmanned Demonstrator spacecraft was also lost in October following launch from a Russian submarine. The satellite controllers lost control of the vehicle as it approached its target. This experimental spacecraft was designed to demonstrate a cheap alternative to the Soyuz spacecraft for transporting cargo to the international space station. It was the fourth failure of the Demonstrator, leading an Izvestiya journalist to comment: "It seems that the spacecraft is haunted by doom." (5) Also in October, Russian engineers lost contact with a previously launched Earth-monitoring satellite and a new optical research satellite was lost due to a booster failure. (6)

The plight of the Russian space program has attracted high level government and industry attention. Two days after the loss of the Molniya-M satellite, Anatoli Perminov, the head of the Russian Space Agency (Roskosmos) publicly declared that whoever was at fault for the crash would be brought to justice. (7) Perminov further stated that if the rocket was designed poorly the culprits would be prosecuted, or if operator error was involved then the senior officers of the Space Corps would be reprimanded. (8) Not surprisingly, the officers of the Space Corp recommended filing a lawsuit against the rocket manufacturer following a surely impartial review of the incident. Space Force Commander Vladimir Popovkin stated: "We have sent a complaint to the rocket's producer and are considering filing a lawsuit together with the Russian Space Agency (Roskosmos) to sue the factory through an arbitration court for the expenses incurred by the Defense Ministry." (9) Popovkin was willing to allow some accommodation, "Of course, we cannot ruin the Progress design bureau, which produced the miserable rocket. Unfortunately, there are no other rocket producers and we are well aware of that." (10)
The consequences of failure for the loss of the ESA launch were more personal as President Putin fired the head of Russia’s Khunichchev space construction company responsible for building the faulty Rokot booster. In November, Putin signed a decree installing Vladimir Nesterov as the head of Khunichchev while relieving Aleksandr Medvedev of this responsibility. (11) Medvedev’s company publicly apologized for the loss of the CryoSat, but it apparently was not enough to save his job. (12)

While the Russian space program is having difficulty getting satellites to orbit, the ones already there are experiencing decline. Most of Russia’s satellites are well beyond their design life with little hope of reconstituting the constellation back to the level of the Soviet era. In November, Anatoli Perminov reported to Russian lawmakers that, ÔRussia has only 96 spacecraft in space, 62 of them well past their service life." (13) As for military satellites, the head of Roskomos said, Ô33 out of 40 spacecraft have outlasted their usefulness.Ó (14) At the same conference, General Oleg Gromov, deputy commander of the Space Forces stated that, Ômissle-attack warning system can no longer be restored through the launch of the hopelessly obsolete 71X6 and 73D6 satellites.Ó (15) He also announced that Russia has fewer than half (3 of 8) of the satellites it needs for space-based missile launch detection. Other types of military reconnaissance satellites are also in dire straights even by General Gromov’s own assessment, ÔTwelve or 13 US electronics intelligence spacecraft are permanently monitoring us, we have only one such craft that is flying." (16)

While the constellation ages, new Russian space capabilities are predictably falling behind. Col-General Aleksandr Zelin, deputy commander of the Air Force reported that Russian aviation uses the American Global Positioning System (GPS) as a stopgap because Russia’s own GLONASS navigation satellite system does not have enough satellites to support flight over all of the Russian territory. (17) This is a major deficiency as US armed forces have shown the tremendously positive effect precision navigation and timing standards have on
modern combat forces. The US GPS is available globally for peacetime use, but the high-precision modes can be selectively encrypted and would then be only available to forces with the proper US-controlled military gear. Consequently, Russian forces are partially dependent on the good favor of the US military until the GLONASS system reaches full operational capability.

A prime example of the disconnect between funding and reality is Russia’s GLONASS system, which is scheduled to be fully populated by 2007. The program is severely under funded and needs a significant boost in financing to hold this schedule. Russia’s top space official publicly lobbied for an additional $100 million after declaring that the GLONASS program was 72% under funded. (18) On a larger scale, Russia’s funding for space is nearly 30 times less than that of the US and 2.5 times less than China according to Roskosmos. (19) Anatoli Perminov expounded on this assessment stating “the United States spends $16.4 billion on space needs, we, $800 million as of 2007.” (20) $800 million per year is not nearly sufficient to maintain the Russian space industry, ground infrastructure, and current spending on orbit satellites.

Furthermore, this level of funding is insufficient to produce satellites incorporating next generation technologies. For example, the US plans to spend over a billion dollars in 2006 alone for development of two new communication satellites: the Advanced EHF and the Transformational Satellite. (21) Given the problems and delays that plague US satellite development even with hefty funding levels, it is unlikely Russia will make much progress in developing advanced satellite technology with its meager resources. Perminov succinctly summarized the Russian disconnect between expectations and reality as, “Our people do not understand why we cannot cater for the same timeframe and level of space developments as the United States, and hoping that it will be possible to preserve the balance of forces with this level of funding is utopia.” (22)

Conclusions
The plight of the Russian space program has significant implications. First, the deterioration of the early warning system contributes to Russia’s perceived need to maintain a large nuclear arsenal. Russia must rely on ground based radar to detect a missile launch, which does not give enough time to sort through the data and make a sound decision before launching a counterstrike. Indeed, Russia’s deterrence is based on maintaining a nuclear arsenal large enough to survive a large-scale attack with enough weapons to mount a credible retaliatory strike. In addition, the decline of the Russian space-based early warning system increases the importance of data sharing between the West and Russia in order to prevent mistakes with regard to false alarms since Russia has little remaining indigenous capability.

The inability of the space program to deliver reliable communications and intelligence limits the effectiveness of the military. The incorporation of space assets has been a key factor in the surge in US conventional capability in the years since the end of the Cold War.

Finally, there’s little hope of recovery for the Russian space program if the fragmented industrial base is not restructured, utopian expectations are not replaced by realistic goals, and funding is not increased to an appropriate level. The Cold War inventory of Russian rockets and satellites is dwindling and the clock is ticking.

Source Notes:

(1) “Space Forces to sue over Molniya-M rocket crash,” RIA Novosti, 15 Jul 05 via ISI Emerging Markets.
(2) Ibid.
(3) “Why do Russian satellites fail to reach orbit?,” RIA Novosti, 23 Jun 05 via Lexis-Nexis.
(4) ÔTwo abortive launches hurt Russia's space ambitions,Ó Associated Press Worldstream, 10 Oct 05 via Lexis-Nexis.
(5) Ibid.
(6) ÔPutin fires head of space company after launch failures,Ó Associated Press, 29 Nov 05 via Lexis-Nexis.
(7) ÔGuilty parties in Molniya-M rocket accident to be punished,Ó RIA Novosti, 23 Jun 05 via ISI Emerging Markets.
(8) Ibid.
(9) ÔSpace Forces to sue over Molniya-M rocket crash,Ó RIA Novosti, 15 Jul 05 via ISI Emerging Markets.
(10) Ibid.
(11) ÔPutin fires head of space company after launch failures,Ó Associated Press, 29 Nov 05 via Lexis-Nexis.
(12) ÔTwo abortive launches hurt Russia's space ambitions,Ó Associated Press Worldstream, 10 Oct 05 via Lexis-Nexis.
(13) ÔRussia's space industry: plagued by funding again,Ó RIA Novosti, 25 Nov 05 via ISI Emerging Markets.
(14) Ibid.
(15) ÔThe Orbital Group Is on its Last Legs: the Motherland of Gagarin Is Dependent on Satellite Information of the United States and Canada,Ó Nezavisimoye voyennoye obozreniye, 24 Nov 05; FBIS Translated text via World News Connection (WNC).
(16) Ibid.
(17) Ibid.
(18) ÔOfficial says RussiaÕs GLONASS project underfinanced by 72%,Ó Prime-TASS Business Newswire, 15 Apr 05 via ISI Emerging Markets.
(19) ÔRussia's space industry: plagued by funding again,Ó RIA Novosti, 25 Nov 05 via ISI Emerging Markets.
(20) ÔThe Orbital Group Is on its Last Legs: the Motherland of Gagarin Is Dependent on Satellite Information of the United States and Canada,Ó
The NATO-Russia Council: cooperation and conflict

At NATO Headquarters on 8 December 2005, the NATO-Russia Council (NRC) will meet at the level of foreign ministers. This twice-annual gathering follows November’s meeting of the NRC at the chiefs of staff level. (1) Observers to the meeting on the 8th should expect to hear themes that similarly were present at November’s meeting. Namely, Russia will continue to pursue its sometimes antagonistic and often contradictory partnership with NATO. The difficulties in this relationship will be manifest in at least three ways: Russia’s hesitancy to participate in a NATO naval exercise that potentially could expand into the Black Sea; Russia’s general support of NATO peacekeeping operations throughout the world, except, of course, in Georgia and Moldova; and, Russia’s persistent resistance to compliance with the Conventional Armed Forces in Europe Treaty (CFE).

Operation Active Endeavor

At November’s NRC meeting for chiefs of staff, General Yuri Baluyevsky, chief of the Russian General Staff, pledged Russia’s military cooperation with NATO in Operation Active Endeavor. (2) The latter is a joint naval exercise NATO began in 2001 as a means to help detect and deter terrorist activity in the Mediterranean. (3) The annual exercise is multi-faceted but mainly involves the monitoring, boarding, and inspection of ships at sea. Although Baluyevsky pledged Russia’s cooperation in Active Endeavor, he also reserved the right to
withdraw from the exercise as Russia sees fit. (4) This is a threat Russia implemented when it last promised Active Endeavor participation at the end of 2003. Russia withdrew from that exercise for a number of reasons, most notably the reticence of Russian ships to participate in “mutual inspection procedures.”

(5) Ironically, it is Russia’s interests in the Black Sea that will affect its ultimate decision to participate in next year’s Active Endeavor.

Russia wants to keep NATO out of the northern and eastern portions of the Black Sea, and it will use Active Endeavor for leverage. Chief among Russia’s concerns could be that Active Endeavor sets a precedent of NATO military cooperation that subsequently could challenge Russian activities in the Black Sea. Currently, Russia’s military presence in breakaway Abkhazia renders possible Russian maritime activity at the port of Sukhumi; a significant portion of Russia’s arms industry is located on Transdniestr’s Dnestr River as it flows through the separatist region and into the Black Sea; and, finally, Russia’s Black Sea Fleet is based in the (Crimean) territory of Warsaw-member-turned-NATO-partner Ukraine. (6) Russia can secure these interests by keeping Active Endeavor from moving out of the Mediterranean and by pre-empting a Black Sea version of the exercise with one of its own.

**Peacekeeping operations**

In addition to Russia’s pledge of support for Operation Active Endeavor, it also has pledged to support other NATO missions around the globe, including NATO’s International Security Assistance Force in Afghanistan. (7) Although Russia supplies little more than technical assistance in Afghanistan, its commitment nonetheless is significant given the location, and Russia’s history there. Also, in the past Russia has partnered with NATO in more meaningful ways, such as providing sizeable troop commitments to NATO’s peacekeeping operations in the Balkans. However, Russia’s commitments to Afghanistan and its participation in the Balkans will not translate to Georgia and Moldova, where Russia does not want NATO’s help.
Russian troops have been serving as ÖgarrisonsÓ or ÖpeacekeepersÓ both in Georgia and Moldova for more than a decade, increasingly despite the demands of the two sovereign republics to leave. Although Russia recently changed its military footprint in Georgia, it still has no plans to vacate the country—especially as Georgia continues to move toward NATO membership. (8) The same holds true in Moldova where Russia maintains about 1,500 troops which, at last yearÕs NRC meeting, Russian Foreign Minister Lavrov stated would remain in Moldova Òindefinitely.Ó (9) That Georgia and Moldova are NATO partner countries in search of more substantial relationships with NATO only adds a further excuse for staying. Moldova expects to finalize its Individual Partnership Action Plan with NATO next year. (10) Meanwhile, GeorgiaÕs foreign minister has expressed his countryÕs desire to adopt the NATO accession plan as early as 2006.Ó (11) Russia counters NATO influence by further entrenching its military troop presence in Georgia and Moldova, where the governments seek to join NATO as a hedge against RussiaÕs persistent pressures.

**Arms reduction in the ÔflankÕ countries of Georgia and Moldova**

Although the presence of Russian arms in Georgia and Moldova has been contentious less publicly than the presence of RussiaÕs troops there, it nonetheless remains a sore point in NATO-Russia relations. The Cold War-era Conventional Armed Forces in Europe Treaty (CFE) remains at the heart of the matter. Since its inception more than 15 years ago, this arms-reduction treaty has gone through several iterations, the latest of which is called the Agreement on Adaptation of the CFE. (12) Unfortunately, this Adaptation has yet to enter into force because Russia has yet to comply with the AdaptationÕs military reduction requirements for the ÔflankÕ regions of Moldova and Georgia. (13)

There has been some progress in both places. Russian Foreign Minister Lavrov and former Georgian Foreign Minister Zourabichrili in 2005 signed an agreement stipulating the removal of Russian military hardware from and the closure of
Russian bases in Georgia. (14) Meanwhile, Russia has removed significant amounts of military stockpiles from Moldova. (15) However, the Russian State Duma has questioned the legality of the Russia-Georgia arms agreement and some experts contend Russia has only destroyed or removed obsolete equipment from Moldova while it supports Russian-owned arms factories in Transdniestr. (16) Furthermore, Russia uses a chicken-and-egg argument that it must maintain troops in Transdniestr to protect arms stockpiles that it cannot remove without first having a political settlement (which it continues to obstruct). (17) The very presence of until Russian troops and military arms poses an obstacle to a settlement.

A place to air grievances
DecemberÕs NRC meeting will be full of diplomatic niceties. But, using history as a guide, the meeting also will serve as a forum in which Russia can air grievances and issue threats, something Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov did not hesitate to do in 2004. (18) The root cause of this antagonism is obvious: NATO continues to expand into areas that Russia claims are in its sphere of influence. Last year the Baltic states joined NATO, a move that encountered particularly vitriolic Russian rhetoric. This year, Georgia and Moldova entered on the path that leads to eventual NATO membership, and NATOÕs anti-terrorism exercise, Active Endeavor, may include Black Sea waters. (19) Although Russia has promised a better relationship with NATO, it will pursue what it describes as Russian self-interests in the Black Sea, Georgia, and Moldova, even at the expense of a meaningful partnership with NATO.

Source Notes:

(1) www.nato.int/docu/pr/2005/p05-143e.htm.
(2) ÒRussian General says Moscow will participate in NATO naval exercise,Ó BW, 16 Nov 05 via RFE/RL Volume 9, Number 215, Part I.
(3) www.nato.int/issues.
Newly Independent States: Caucasus

By Kate Martin
GEORGIA

Who should take Georgia to the prom?

Just in case there was any doubt in which diplomatic direction Georgia is leaning, Tbilisi issued the country’s National Military Strategy late last month that put all questions to rest. The document, a requirement for NATO, was drafted by the General Staff, parliament’s Committee on National Defense and Security, nongovernmental organizations and other experts, from Georgia and some NATO countries. (1) In the document, Tbilisi points to the continued existence of Russian military bases on Georgian soil as a Òdestabilizing factorÓ along with instability in the North Caucasus, armed formations in Abkhazia and South Ossetia, and new crisis points on other Georgian territory. (2)

To counter these and other threats, the Georgian military (reformed to NATO standards) will receive a significant chunk of the national budget, to the tune of about US$218 million, for 2006. (3)

In a response only missing the words Òsays you,Ó the Russian Foreign Ministry criticized the notion that Russian troops could be considered destabilizing: ÒThe absurdity of such assertions is apparent,Ó he said. (4)

Georgian President Mikheil Saakashvili and his cabinet have made no secret of the country’s plans to join the alliance. According to the State Minister for Euro-Atlantic Integration, Giorgi Baramidze, once the country finishes work on the NATO Individual Partnership Action Plan (IPAP), ÒWe hope our relations will then move to a higher level: the NATO Membership Action Plan (MAP).Ó Still, Georgia is ready to keep open the doors to all powers: ÒWe are looking for opportunities to cooperate with Russia, with which we have more common interests than disputes,Ó he added. (5)
Georgia is not above using its new best friend to put added pressure on Russia to continue working toward troop withdrawal; Tbilisi proposed that NATO monitor the withdrawal from Russian bases in Georgia once the final protocol is signed. (6) Georgian Prime Minister Zurab Nogaideli asserted further that Georgia’s plan for settling the conflict in South Ossetia had garnered the approval of the European Union, NATO and the Belgian government following the minister’s trip to Brussels. (7) Officials from Russia and the two separatists republics, South Ossetia and Abkhazia, of course, most definitely have not agreed to the plan. (8)

In terms of alliances, though, Georgia is not limiting itself to NATO. According to the President’s Chief of Staff, Giorgi Arveladze, an international forum held last week in Kyiv was intended to create an “axis of democratic countries that do not wish to be in the orbit of Russian influence.” Included in the forum were the heads of state of countries that have struggled to regain and retain independence from Moscow, such as Ukraine, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, and Moldova, as well as representatives of some states in the Balkans. (9) Despite Arveladze’s clear speaking, Saakashvili appeasingly said subsequently the new “Democratic Choice Community” to be formed as a result of the forum was not an anti-Russian association. “No one in Georgia could say such a stupid thing. Russia will only benefit from gaining neighboring democratic states,” the Georgian president said. (10) Perhaps one should note that Arveladze was not “in Georgia” when he made his remarks.

Meanwhile, comments from the Georgian parliament that the country should consider withdrawing from the Commonwealth of Independent States resulted in a less-than-friendly shot across the bow from counterparts in Moscow. According to Russian Duma deputy Aleksei Mitrofanov, Russia should bomb Tbilisi and install Igor Giorgadze, Georgia’s former security chief now in exile, in place of Saakashvili. (11) The parliamentary scuffling was put to rest when Nogaideli attended the Council of the CIS Heads of Government meeting in the Russian capital.
ARMENIA

Not in my yard

Armenian President Robert Kocharian, on the other hand, stressed that aspiring to NATO membership is not on the agenda in Yerevan. "Now just look at the political map of the world, at the South Caucasus with always strong Russian influence and at Armenia bordering on Turkey and Iran and ask yourselves – will membership of NATO increase Armenia’s security or not?,Ó he said, ÔThat is why we are not talking about membership of NATO or setting ourselves such a task.Ó (12)

Who could say ÒnoÓ?

Armenia’s recent nationwide constitutional referendum also has generated its share of international ink, as opponents of the expansion of parliamentary powers balk at accepting the stated results of the poll.

Before results were announced, the opposition accused the president and prosecutor-general of applying open pressure and blackmail to opposition representatives. (13) Alas, the opposition demanded the annulment of the results by the Central Election Commission, or Ôappropriate political stepsÓ would be taken; however, the CEC responded that the Constitutional Court, not the CEC, was the place where appeals could be heard. (14) In any case, appeals should be heard, given the preliminary results: according to the Central Commission for the Referendum chairman Garegin Azarian, over 93 percent of Armenian voters approved the constitutional amendment. (15)

Despite noting instances where Ôthe low turnout in many elections districts in Yerevan and in the regions contradicts the exaggerated figured reported by the electoral commissions,Ó Ôsome forged signatures of electorsÓ and the breach of the principle of secret balloting, as well as Ôunequal conditions for the
opponents of the reform, monitors from the Council of Europe announced that the voting met international criteria in most districts. (16)

CHECHNYA

Military presence notable on streets and at polls
To the surprise of absolutely no one, the parliamentary elections backed by the Moscow-supported president of Chechnya, Alu Alkhanov, resulted in an overwhelming majority of the Moscow-supporting United Russia Party on 27 November. Chechen rebels declared the election a farce, citing empty polling stations, thousands of occupiers and puppets armed to the teeth and the number of soldiers voting outnumbering the civilian electorate. (17) In the capital, their allegations seem on target: According to representatives of the Memorial human rights center, residents of Grozny largely ignored the parliamentary elections. Moreover, Memorial registered differences between figures provided by election commission heads and observers from political parties. (18)

Furthermore, indicating indifference to how such displays of force might affect perceptions of democracy in action, Russian officials did not deny that there was an extraordinary number of Russian military representatives marking ballots; more than 33,000 Defense Ministry, Interior Ministry and Border Guard troops were included on the voter lists. These service personnel were accorded the right to take part in a poll to elect the Chechen parliament because they are permanently stationed on the (Chechen) republic's territory, said one source from the headquarters of the Combined Group of Forces in the North Caucasus. (19)

While few international observers considered overseeing what is, in fact, a regional election within Russia (and an extremely violent region at that), the head of the PACE delegation to Chechnya, Andreas Gross, expressed doubts that sufficiently democratic conditions existed on the ground, given intimidation by law
enforcement bodies, and the continued killings and kidnappings besetting Chechnya. (20) Apparently, one needs to be armed with more than an awareness of democratic precepts to venture into polling stations.

**AZERBAIJAN**

**Opposition beaten**

Opponents of President Ilham Aliyev’s hold of the Azerbaijani government may have been unable to make themselves heard before and during the recent parliamentary elections in that country, but they have managed to make their presence known now that the polling has ended. Unfortunately, many have become quite bruised (literally) in the attempt. Post-election rallies succeeded in generating substantial numbers of supporters, but they also succeeded in generating the attention of the authorities. The most recent rally, held on 26 November, ended with the use of water cannons and batons against participants and the arrest of around 30 protesters, on the premise that the rally was threatening the peace by exceeding the 2-hour limit imposed by government officials. (21)

The president of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE), as well as the US and UK embassies in Baku, condemned the rally’s violent suppression; so, too, did representatives of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe. (22)

Opposition leaders, faced with the government’s refusal of permission to hold a 3 December rally in downtown Baku, postponed the planned gathering for a week. (23) At this point, opponents can only hope, and even then likely in vain, for international sanctions. Since they have not been forthcoming to this point, however, it is unlikely that sanctions will be issued, particularly since the new Mill Majilis session opened on 2 December. The elections were generally seen by Western observers as a step, but a small step, in the right direction, towards democracy; however, most observers noted illegalities and irregularities at
several polling stations. (24) But after annulling the results from 10 constituencies, last week the Constitutional Court endorsed enough of the results to allow parliament to sit. (25)

Source Notes:

(1) Kommersant, 29 Nov 05; Defense and Security via Lexis-Nexis.
(2) Vremya Novostei, 28 Nov 05; What the Papers Say, via Lexis-Nexis.
(3) Ibid.
(4) ITAR-TASS, 30 Nov 05; FBIS Transcribed Text via WNC.
(5) Interfax, 25 Nov 05; FBIS Transcribed Text via WNC.
(6) Interfax, 1 Dec 05; FBIS Transcribed Text via WNC.
(7) Interfax, 2 Dec 05; FBIS Transcribed Text via WNC.
(8) ITAR-TASS, 2 Dec 05; FBIS Translated Text via WNC.
(9) Interfax, 30 Nov 05; FBIS Transcribed Text via WNC.
(10) ITAR-TASS, 2 Dec 05; FBIS Transcribed Text via WNC.
(11) Georgian TV1, 22 Nov 05; FBIS Translated Text via WNC.
(12) Mediamax, 2 Dec 05; FBIS Translated Text via WNC.
(13) Arminfo, 27 Nov 05; FBIS Translated Text via WNC.
(14) Arminfo, 1 Dec 05; FBIS Translated Text via WNC.
(15) ITAR-TASS, 28 Nov 05; FBIS Transcribed Text via WNC.
(16) Mediamax, 28 Nov 05; FBIS Translated Text via WNC.
(17) Kavkaz-Tsentr News Agency, 27 Nov 05; FBIS Translated Text via WNC.
(18) Interfax, 28 Nov 05; FBIS Transcribed Text via WNC.
(19) Interfax, 28 Nov 05; FBIS Translated Text via WNC.
(20) Interfax, 28 Nov 05; FBIS Transcribed Text via WNC.
(21) ITAR-TASS and Interfax, 26 Nov 05; FBIS Transcribed Text via WNC.
(22) Turan, 30 Nov 05 and Nezavisimaya gazeta, 2 Dec 05; FBIS Translated Text via WNC.
(23) Interfax, 2 Dec 05; FBIS Transcribed Text, via WNC
(24) See The ISCIPI Analyst, 15 Nov 05
Newly Independent States: Central Asia

By Fabian Adami

KAZAKHSTAN

Presidential Elections.

On Sunday December 4, the Republic of Kazakhstan held Presidential elections. Although the polls were widely expected to result in a "clean sweep" for the incumbent Nursultan Nazarbaev, the President and his supporters took no chances. In order to ensure a smooth electoral process, the President and those close to him have, during the last six months, engaged in a systemic campaign aimed at discrediting and intimidating the country’s opposition forces.

In June 2005, a series of bills were introduced to the Majlis designed to stifle the operations of foreign and domestic NGOs. Had the bills passed, these organizations would have faced government audits at best, and closure at worst. Somewhat surprisingly, the Kazakh Supreme Constitutional Council in late August ruled that the bills were unconstitutional. (1)

President Nazarbaev’s reaction to the Council’s ruling revealed his motivation for having the bills introduced. During a September 2005 press conference, he stated that NGOs would be subject to close observation in the run-up to the election, and that they would not be allowed to place their support behind any one candidate. Moreover, he explicitly noted the alleged activities of NGOs in fomenting revolutions in "neighboring countries," where NGOs had "pumped money and destabilized society." (2)

The President's most "dangerous" opponent in the polls was Zharmakhan Tuyakbai, former member of Otan (Nazarbaev's party), and Speaker of the
Majlis. Tuyakbai has been at the center of the government's anti-opposition efforts. First, in mid-August, Tuyakbai was warned about "illegal campaigning." (3) In late September, computers and other electronic equipment were damaged in an apparent arson attack on his campaign headquarters. Then on 12 October, Tuyakbai's campaign manager, Tolen Tokhasynov, was arrested for organizing illegal political meetings in Almaty. Tokhasynov has apparently still not been released. Finally, several tons of campaign material was destroyed when the car transporting it between Almaty and Semipalatinsk caught fire in an "accident." (4)

Tuyakbai's entourage and close supporters have not been immune from (apparent) government actions. On 2 November, Yelena Nikitina, another campaign official, reported her daughter missing. Nikitina claimed that her daughter had disappeared after she refused to cooperate with police by informing on Tuyakbai's campaign. (5) No reports have emerged that indicate Oksana Nikitina's safe return. Nikitina's apparent kidnapping is as disturbing as the assassination of Zamanbek Nurkadilov.

Zamanbek Nurkadilov was, until last year, a government minister and close ally of the President. More recently, he had been a vocal Tuyakbai supporter. On the weekend of 12 November, Nurkadilov was found dead in his Almaty home. According to his lawyer, he had been shot twice in the chest and once in the head. (6)

An investigation into Nurkadilov's death launched by the Interior Ministry concluded that Nurkadilov had committed suicide due to "family conflict." (7) This conclusion is "supported" by the fact that Nurkadilov's home (according to police) showed no sign of struggle or forced entry. (8) Evidence cited by Serikali Musin, Nurkadilov's lawyer makes the suicide conclusion nefarious at best. Musin claims that a small pillow found at the house contained a gunshot hole, suggesting it was used as a silencer or muffler. (9)
In an incident bound to cast further suspicion upon the government, Nurkadilov's widow, Makpal Zhunusova called a press conference in Almaty on 25 November. During the session—held with Musin, Zhunusova displayed what appeared to be a covert microphone, which she claimed had been planted in her home by the authorities after her husband's death. (10) It seems likely Security Forces were seeking to monitor her activities during their investigation and, given her husband's opposition to Nazarbaev, during the election. Weeks prior to his death, Nurkadilov announced that he was in possession of documents proving "massive corruption" in the President's family. (11) It seems evident that the aim of Nurkadilov's murderers was to prevent this evidence from becoming public knowledge.

In addition to the Òdirect measuresÓ described above, the Kazakh government's rhetoric against the opposition was stepped up in the weeks prior to the election. On 17 November, the Interior Minister, Baurzhan Mukhamejanov, claimed that the opposition was "arming radicals" in preparation for mass demonstrations, and that some groups were attempting to bribe election officials. (12) Then, on 24 November, Kazakhstan's NSS (successor to the KGB) issued an official statement noting that opposition groups were preparing "ill-considered" behavior before and during the polls, and warning that attempts to destabilize the country would be "severely dealt with." (13) It should be noted at this juncture, that Zharmakhan Tuyakbai has explicitly denied any opposition plans for unrest during or after the election. (14)

In spite of these Òdirty tricksÓ, the Kazakh government attempted to present a Òfair and democraticÓ image to the outside world. On 17 November, four of the Presidential candidates participated in a debate, portrayed by the government as central to the election. Televised by Khabar TV (owned by President Nazarbaev's daughter Dariga), the discussion covered a number of issues, including corruption, poverty and unemployment. (15) President Nazarbaev did not
participate since he was on a state visit to Ukraine. If anything, his absence signified that he was not truly concerned about his electoral chances, or the likelihood of a Kazakh "color revolution." Secondly, on 28 November, the Central Election Commission announced that in line with requests from some observers, the election would take place without the use of envelopes, due to the fact that they could be used for illegal ballot stuffing. (16)

Voting began at 7:00 am Kazakh time on Sunday, with many of the 9,500 polling stations using the same Sailau electronic system that was used during last year's Parliamentary elections. According to CEC Chairman Onalsyn Zhumabekov, some 10% of registered eligible voters had cast their ballot by 11:00 am. (17) When voting stations closed at 8:00 pm local time, exit polls suggested that Nazarbaev had obtained between 77 and 87% of votes, while Tuyakbai obtained a mere 7-13%. (18)

A Nazarbaev landslide was confirmed Monday morning when the Central Election Commission reported its preliminary results. According to the CEC, the President obtained 91% of the vote, while his closest opponent, Zharmakhan Tuyakbai achieved a paltry 6.6%. (19) Final results are expected in approximately ten days.

The OSCE, in its preliminary report, has noted that there were "some improvements" in the election process, most notably in that voters were provided with an "opportunity of choice," with five candidates running. (20) But the report referred to numerous violations including intimidation, harassment and lack of opportunity for candidates equally to present their views. Violations—such as ballot stuffing and proxy voting, were observed in 27% of vote counts, while "serious violations," including results protocol tampering were seen in 21% of vote counts. (21) The OSCE's final report will be published in two months.
President Nazarbaev's victory is not unexpected—many observers predicted that Kazakhs would "vote for stability." (22) In light of the country's past electoral history and Nazarbaev's skill at suppressing or undermining his opponents, a Tuyakbai victory was effectively impossible. Given Nazarbaev's recent exhibitions of paranoia vis-à-vis revolution, it is safe to predict that the OSCE's report will find that vote count inflations are worse than they have been in prior ballots.

**The Bear hug**

In May 2005, the Uzbek government responded to peaceful protests in Andijan with a massive show of force. After surrounding and cutting off the town, Interior Ministry forces moved in, killing up to 700 people. (23) The massacre resulted in widespread condemnation of the Uzbek regime's Human Rights record from governments worldwide, including those of the United States, and Britain, as well as in calls for an independent inquiry into the incident. (24)

The Uzbek government's response to criticism has been to reject it out of hand. In July, President Islam Karimov apparently was behind calls from the Shanghai Cooperation Organization for a timetable of US base closures in Central Asia. (25) On 31 July, the Uzbek government officially notified the US government that its forces had six months to vacate the K2 airbase, 90 miles north of the Afghan border. (26) Four months later, on 22 November, the US announced officially that the base had been vacated. (27)

Throughout the last six months, President Islam Karimov has received support—if not praise—from Moscow for his handling of Andijan. The Russian government has openly supported the Uzbek version of events, claiming that its own intelligence services (presumably SVR) had known of the terrorists' plans and Afghan connections. (28)
In contrast to the Russian response, the criticism from the US over Andijan has—at least according to President Karimov—driven Uzbekistan back into Russia's arms. On 14 November, as he prepared to travel to Moscow for talks with President Vladimir Putin, Karimov claimed that "the resentful forces that have been told to leave the Khanabad airfield will not rest. They never tire of subversive activities." (29) Karimov intimated that the goal of these "resentful forces" was to discredit the Uzbek government and "make Uzbekistan obey." Karimov's remarks linked the (now former) US presence in the country to the alliance treaty he would conclude with Putin the same day: "When this agreement comes into effect, any hostile actions directed against Uzbekistan, any attempts to attack or occupy Uzbekistan will mean an assault on Russia." (30)

The alliance treaty—conspicuously signed on the same day that the Supreme Court delivered guilty verdicts and 14-20 year jail sentences in the Andijan trial (31), contains a clause (Article 2), which states that: "If an act of aggression is committed against one of the sides by any state or group of states, this will be viewed as an act of aggression against both sides." (32) Militarily, the treaty also provides for basing agreements between the two countries, as well as for weapons transfers—which apparently have already begun. (33) The treaty also encompasses economic and trade clauses, with Russian companies such as LUKoil and Gazprom seeking to invest up to $2.5 Billion in Uzbekistan. (34)

President Karimov has clearly chosen to return to Russia's embrace. But questions remain as to how deep the relationship really is. Will Uzbekistan cut all links with GUUAM and join the Common Security Treaty Organization (currently comprising Kazakhstan, Armenia, Belarus, Russia, Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan)? Will Russian bases be established in Uzbekistan, and finally, will the remaining Western troops (such as the German contingent at Termez) also be evicted?

Source Notes:
(1) See ISCIP Analyst, Volume XI, Number 1 (20 Oct 05).
(2) Ibid.
(3) Ibid.
(4) Ibid.
(5) See ISCIP Analyst, Volume XI, Number 3 (17 Nov 05).
(6) Ibid.
(7) "Kazakh Opposition Figure’s Death Ruled Suicide," RFE/RL Features Article, 29 Nov 05 via www.rferl.org/featuresarticle/2005/11/55e307fe-ebd7-4d80-b9f0-be332e4ae583.html.
(8) TCA-Kazakhstan, 15 Nov 05; The Times of Central Asia via ISI Emerging Markets Database.
(9) Ibid.
(12) IntelliNews-Kazakhstan Today, 18 Nov 05; ISI-Intellinews via ISI Emerging Markets Database.
(15) Newsline-Transcaucasus & Central Asia, 18 Nov 05; Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty via ISI Emerging Markets Database.
"Kazakhstan: Voters Cast Ballots For Next President," RFE/RL Features Article, 04 Dec 05 via www.rferl.org/featuresarticle/2005/12/199ad7fe-bd0a-4d92-adfe-c1d28451fe5b.html.


Ibid.


See The ISCIP Analyst, Volume X, Number 7 (08 June 2005).

See The ISCIP Analyst, Volume X, Number 8 (26 July 2005).

Ibid.


See ISCIP Analyst, Volume X, Number 8 (26 July 2005).


Ibid.

BELARUS

Soviet times are here again

Today, if Senator John McCain were a Belarusian politician in Belarus, it is likely that he would be in prison. If Senator Joseph Biden were a Belarusian opposition politician in Belarus, probably he would be serving time in a labor colony. What would be their crime? Questioning – no matter how benignly – the policies or actions of their country’s president.

For several years now, such action has been illegal in Belarus and punishable by extended time in prison or labor camps. This law has been a powerful tool against the country’s strongest opposition politicians, most of whom now sit behind bars.

But beginning in the very near future, as a result of anticipated changes to Belarusian criminal codes, not only politicians or outspoken activists, but also journalists, human rights monitors and even heads of polling firms run the risk of similar treatment. Such is the state run by the man President Bush once called “Europe’s last dictator,” Aleksandr Lukashenko.
Last week, Lukashenko took the latest step in his stated plan to maintain a link with Soviet times. In the 11 years of his rule, the man, who became president in elections widely condemned as rigged, has reintroduced Soviet symbols and continues to perpetuate the cults of personality surrounding Lenin and Stalin. But most importantly, he has worked hard to maintain the police state left to Belarus as the Soviet Union’s legacy.

On 2 December, this police state reached new levels when the rubber stamp lower house of parliament overwhelmingly passed new criminal codes. These codes will allow the authorities to label as criminal any protest gathering, publication or broadcast of negative information about the state, as well as the receipt of assistance from international organizations or foreign countries.

In the future, the Tom Brokaw’s of Belarus would be behind bars for relaying both positive and negative news about the country, as would the Bob Geldof’s, for organizing gatherings to spotlight policies that need improvement.

International Helsinki Federation Executive Director Aaron Rhodes heavily criticized the proposed new codes, grouped together under the general category of ‘Discrediting the Republic of Belarus.’ If adopted, he said, ‘this law could be interpreted to render human rights monitoring and reporting as well as any kind of criticism of the authorities illegal.’ (1)

Belarusian politicians and journalists also reacted strongly, with Aleksandr Milinkevich, Lukashenko’s sole opponent in next year’s presidential election, suggesting simply, ‘This is a return to Stalinism.’ (2)

The bill must now pass the upper house and then be signed by Lukashenko, and both the European Union and the United States released almost identically worded statements calling on Lukashenko not to sign the law or face ‘serious consequences.’ (3)
However, comments by the head of Belarus’s KGB – as the security service is still known – suggest that Lukashenko and his allies are unconcerned about Western condemnation of their actions. ÒWe have to protect national security and prevent color revolutions like those that happened in Georgia, Ukraine and Kyrgyzstan,Ó Stepan Sukharenko said. (4)

Clearly, Lukashenko has presidential elections on his mind. To maintain his own power, he must win, and no rhetorical criticism from Tony Blair or George Bush is likely to deter him from this goal.

Moreover, Lukashenko is regularly and repeatedly Òpropped upÓ by neighbor Russia. This support enables Lukashenko to continue to pursue whatever policy he wishes, as long as it is not strongly opposed by the Kremlin.

In return, Russia receives preferential treatment when state assets are disbursed, the right to deploy weaponry on Belarus’s soil – at the border of the European Union and NATO – and a firm outpost against the creeping ÒWesternizationÓ of Central and Eastern Europe.

Just this week, É Kosachov, chairman of the Russian State Duma Foreign Affairs Committee, defended Belarus against strong (and increasing) criticism of it by Polish officials. ÒPoland’s meddling in the internal affairs of Belarus, is in the view of Russia, inadmissible and uncivilized.Ó (5) It is unclear whether Kosachov was expressing an official opinion, but notably, his statement was not retracted or questioned by any higher-ranking Russian official.

Even more importantly, this week, Russia confirmed that Belarus would continue to receive Russian gas at the bargain price of just over $46 per cubic meter. This is in direct opposition to Russia’s attempts to force Ukraine, Moldova and
Georgia to more than double the price they are currently paying. In fact, Russian energy is Belarus’s main lifeline.

As reported previously in TIA, a Bratislava-based NGO recently completed an examination of Belarus’s energy market in relation to its economy, and suggested that in order to have an impact on Lukashenko’s actions, oil exports to the EU should be frozen. This, the Pontis Foundation said, “could strike a direct blow against the Minsk government by blocking oil exports from Belarus.”

The study found that Belarusian authorities and government-owned businesses make considerable profits by importing Russian oil into Belarus at bargain prices and then exporting it to the EU at market—or just below market—prices. These contracts with the EU are reportedly worth up to 3.3 billion euros each year and allow Lukashenko to maintain his country at a minimum subsistence level. Without these funds, the Belarusian president would be forced to reform the economy and allow his citizens more Western contact.

Other opposition activists in Belarus have also called on the EU to take a stand against Russia’s ascension to the G8 presidency next month, in response to Russian support for Lukashenko’s regime. However, the EU has so far refused to punish Moscow for new draft Russian laws that could force Western-based NGOs out of Russia, and even place EU citizens at risk of harassment or detention. Consequently, it seems unlikely that the organization—or the US for that matter—will concern itself with pushing Russia to end its support for Lukashenko.

Nevertheless, Amnesty International in Poland is undertaking a campaign to raise awareness of the situation in Belarus. “Silence is the worst thing,” Amnesty-Poland Spokesperson Mirella Tanek said. “People need to be made aware of what is happening in Belarus.” Tanek is no doubt glad to be in
Poland. If she were in Belarus, she would be waiting undoubtedly for a knock on the door.

UKRAINE

The price of democratic choice

Over the last several weeks, Ukraine demonstrated considerable progress in its relations with Western and Central Europe, hosting a successful EU-Ukraine summit, and sponsoring a major gathering of Central and Southeastern European leaders. Not coincidentally, at the same time, relations between Russia and Ukraine seem to have taken yet another downturn, with Russia angrily demanding that Kyiv more than double the price it pays for natural gas.

I. Sand in the eye of the lion

In early December, Ukraine worked toward its stated desire to position itself as a regional hub when President Viktor Yushchenko hosted British Prime Minister Tony Blair for the EU-Ukraine Summit, and oversaw the successful completion of the Community of Democratic Choice international forum, containing democracies and countries embarked on a democratic path.

The EU-Ukraine summit was notable primarily for the announcement that Ukraine immediately would be granted market economy status. Although the economic benefit is unknown and possibly small, the political symbolism of being accepted onto the EU economic playing field is huge. The two also signed an agreement on joint satellite navigation (the Galileo project) and a memorandum on energy security aimed at the “progressive integration of the Ukrainian energy market to the EU.”

But Yushchenko must have been most buoyed by the positive – and somewhat unexpected – praise both from Blair personally and within the summit declaration.
Blair hailed “significant” progress on Ukraine’s fulfillment of the EU-Ukraine Action Plan, suggesting that if the country continues to move forward "the possibilities are limitless in developing our relationship." Further, he praised "a new and deeper and stronger relationship between the European Union and Ukraine." (9)

Additionally, the summit declaration welcomed Ukraine’s firm commitment to shared values of democracy, rule of law and respect for human rights, noted progress made in promoting economic reforms, recognized the country’s leadership in the area of regional stability, and further noted new prospects for a considerable enhancement of the level and quality of EU-Ukraine relations. (10)

The fact that these statements occurred in Kyiv at this particular time was intensely symbolic, especially when the EU-Russia summit was held days later not in Moscow, but in London.

Not long after Blair departed Kyiv, Ukraine opened the forum of the Community of Democratic Choice – founded by Yushchenko and Georgian President Mikhail Saakashvili in order to support states transitioning to democracy. According to TV 5 Kanal, 120 participants from 18 countries attended the event. “The forum is not traditional,” the station announced. “The first to meet are not state officials, but representatives of the so-called NGOs, various foundations, centers and institutions.” (11)

While the attempt to allow civic activists to mingle and exchange ideas was a crucial part of the event, the spotlight shone squarely on the significant number of state leaders in attendance. The presidents of Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Moldova, Romania, Macedonia, Georgia and Slovenia took part, as did US Undersecretary for Democracy and Global Affairs Paula Dobriansky, who read a
greeting from US President George Bush. Representatives of the Council of Europe and the OSCE also attended as observers.

Organizers seemed to go out of their way to provide the opportunity for Belarusian opposition presidential candidate Alyaksandr Milinkevich to speak. In his presentation, Milinkevich resurrected the rhetoric of the Orange Revolution. “If our demands to the government that the election must be in line with the constitution are not satisfied, we will invite people to the streets,” he said. This will be a peaceful revolution, this will be a revolution similar to that in Ukraine.”

In response, the forum adopted a strongly-worded resolution expressing “serious concern over the situation in Belarus where the dictatorship of Lukashenko openly violates human rights and basic freedoms.”

Yushchenko and Moldovan President Vladimir Voronin also urged joint action to settle the Transnistria conflict, and Voronin, in particular, urged closer integration – up to the creation of a parliamentary assembly. “We would like to see,” he said, “integration of countries seeking implementation of European institutions and the adoption of ensuing values.”

In the first six months of 2006, forums will be convened in Bucharest and Vilnius, as Ukraine works to increase the joint power of the countries in the Black Sea, Baltic and Caspian regions. Or, as Lithuanian President Valdas Adamkus said, “a new power that can be seen and heard.”

Belarusian President Aleksandr Lukashenko quickly lashed out at the grouping, saying it “has no future,” while Russian President Vladimir Putin, who was invited to the event, simply ignored it. It is clear from the reemergence of the gas conflict between Ukraine and Russia, however, that the Kremlin does not intend to allow Kyiv to proceed easily with its plan to create a new center of power on Russia’s doorstep.
II. The Gas Wars

Ukraine’s row with Russia over the price Kyiv pays for gas ended recently with negotiations postponed indefinitely, calls on Europe for support by both sides, and an accusation that Ukraine’s position would result in the interruption of Europe’s gas supplies from Siberia.

At issue is the extremely low price paid by Kyiv currently for Russian gas – $50 per cubic meter for a portion of the supply and $80 per cubic meter for the rest. This price is less than half the current European average of $160.

The discounted price is one part of a well-worn Russian strategy to keep former Soviet republics close by fostering interdependence in the areas of military, security, energy and transport. As such, all former Soviet republics — with the exception of the Baltic States — always have received preferential pricing agreements with Russia’s Gazprom. In Ukraine’s case, its gas price also takes into consideration the country’s vital role in transiting the vast majority of Russian gas to Europe.

But Gazprom officials now suggest that they want to transform their company into a modern, market-based entity, and make the first steps toward European standards of payment in gas deals. This, they said, would necessitate a shift to market-based prices.

This argument has merit, and given the increase in world gas prices, it would, at first glance, seem inappropriate to expect Gazprom to continue to provide such deep discounts to the former Soviet republics.

This case loses considerable momentum, however, when the 2006 gas prices being demanded of the various republics are examined. For example, Gazprom is demanding that Armenia — which is on very good terms with Russia — and
Ukraine pay vastly different prices ($110 vs. $160, respectively). "Since the distance to Armenia and Ukraine is roughly the same,Ó Dmitri Mangilev of RussiaÕs Prospect brokerage firm said, Òwe can assume that private likes and dislikes play a part in deciding gas prices for them." (17)

Gazprom has also requested $120 per cubic meter from Georgia and $150 from Moldova, major increases for countries that, like Ukraine, have very difficult relations with Russia. At the same time, RussiaÕs closest ally, Belarus, will see no increase in its price, paying less than $47 per cubic meter. The self-styled Transnistria republic — an largely ethnic-Russian separatist enclave on Moldovan territory — also will see no increase in its energy costs, although the price it pays, if any, has not been announced publicly. And Russia itself will continue to pay under $30 per cubic meter for GazpromÕs gas. Clearly, market prices are not GazpromÕs primary consideration.

After Ukrainian representatives broke off negotiations, a Gazprom statement said, ÒUkraineÕs unconstructive attitude . . . threatens the energy security of European consumers of Russian gas as well as of Ukraine itself.Ó (18) Moreover, Gazprom Deputy Chairman Aleksandr Medvedev announced that his company had protested to the European Commission. (19)

Meanwhile, Andrei Kokoshin, Chairman of the Russian State Duma Committee on International Affairs, made clear that GazpromÕs new demands are not based on economic concerns. ÒOur purpose is to create a competent integrated association uniting Ukraine, Russia, Kazakhstan and Belarus,Ó he said. ÒIf Ukraine demonstrates political and economic movement toward the Euro-Atlantic [region], RussiaÕs subsidies of the Ukrainian industry at the expense of gas prices are absolutely illogical.Ó (20)
Medvedev, for his part, suggested last week that Ukraine, Georgia and Moldova should agree to Gazprom's new prices before the end of the year, but did not say what would happen if they did not.

Source Notes:

(1) The Associated Press, 2 Dec 05 via Lexis-Nexis.
(3) Agence France Presse, 1618 GMT, 3 Dec 05 via Lexis-Nexis.
(5) PAP News Agency, 2115 GMT, 30 Nov 05; BBC Monitoring via Lexis-Nexis.
(6) EUObserver.com, 30 Sep 05 via Lexis-Nexis.
(7) IPS-Inter Press Service, 29 Nov 05.
(8) EU-Ukraine Summit, Kiev, Joint statement, 1 Dec 05 (Presse 337) via http://europa.eu.int.
(9) Agence France Presse, 1738 GMT, 1 Dec 05 via Lexis-Nexis.
(10) EU-Ukraine Summit, Kiev, Joint statement, 1 Dec 05 (Presse 337) via http://europa.eu.int.
(11) TV 5 Kanal, 1500 GMT, 1 Dec 01; BBC Monitoring via Lexis-Nexis.
(12) Ibid.
(13) UNIAN news agency, 0908 GMT, 2 Dec 05 BBC Monitoring, via Lexis-Nexis.
(14) Interfax, 1514 GMT, 2 Dec 05 via Lexis-Nexis.
(15) Baltic News Service, 2 Dec 05 via Lexis-Nexis.
(16) RIA Novosti, 2045 CET, 23 Nov 05 via en.rian.ru.
(17) Nezavisimaya gazeta, 5 Dec 05, p.4; Russian Press Digest via Lexis-Nexis.
(18) Associated Press, 6 Dec 05 via Yahoo! News.
(19) NTV Mir, 1300 GMT, 30 Nov 05; BBC Monitoring via Lexis-Nexis.
(20) RIA Novosti, 22 Nov 05 via Lexis-Nexis.