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Succession haunts policy

One of the hallmarks of the Yel'tsin presidency was the frequency of the president's absences from the Kremlin: Beginning shortly after the August 1991 coup and continuing through both his terms, Yel'tsin had an unsettling habit of disappearing from view just when his firm leadership seemed most necessary. On a few occasions, Yel'tsin's absences revealed the bitterness of the struggles going on under the Kremlin carpets. Within hours of his departure "on vacation," scores of decrees over Yel'tsin's "signature" would be published. (1) On occasion, the decrees would redistribute Kremlin authority and set up duplicate bodies in complete contradiction to previous decrees, revealing more about the relative status of the apparatchiks than the president's policy preferences. (2)

The jibs and tacks of Putin's recent policy decisions likewise may provide more insight into the Kremlin succession struggles than true changes of course in policy. At least, that possibility is clearly at the forefront of heightened journalistic instincts when assessing recent personnel decisions. Thus, Dmitri Medvedev and Sergei Ivanov have been installed as Putin's first tier successors; Dmitri Kozak was banished to the Caucasus (by a devious Sechin?) to prevent his influence in the succession struggle, and then further marginalized in the recent transfer of anti-terrorism authority to Nikolai Patrushev (See Security Services below).

The relative influence of Putin's key advisers is certainly an issue of crucial importance, especially now when policy-making is at perhaps its most opaque in recent Russian history. In particular, the collective status of the siloviki (if they
can, in fact, be viewed collectively) appears on the rise, but their policy goals remain vague: most analyses assume this group adheres to a strongly centrist, nationalist-tinted, western-eschewing ideology. In many ways, they are seen as fitting into the slavophile tradition of Russian history: Looking less to the west as a model of development than to the east, or more often, internally—as in the Third Rome or Third Way.

While the conventional division within the Putin administration is viewed as liberal versus siloviki, in the case of the "liberal" branch, the contrasting moniker to slavophile – the westernizers – really does seem more apt. The focus of the liberal, reformist (economically at least) wing is integration into the primarily western economic system and often, attendant integration into political and military organizations as well.

Interestingly this year, some of the key international events at which westernizers traditionally have been well-represented, such as the Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland, were sparsely attended by Russian political leaders. Even the composition of the Russian delegation at Davos, which was headed by a stalwart of the liberal faction, German Gref, was the subject of controversy, as higher-level officials either chose to, or were ordered to, stay away. (3)

Clearly, questions of economic integration and foreign investment—two mainstays of Davos discussions—are central policy issues for the Russian government, and the absence of the Prime Minister, President or a power name stand-in at this event alone speaks volumes. Perhaps more importantly is the power play that prevented a major force to stay away: Finance Minister Aleksei Kudrin was forbidden from traveling to the event by the Prime Minister. This suggests either turmoil within the government over who should represent Russia's interests abroad (or perhaps, whom the PM finds a more trustworthy representative), or a publicly-played scene in the succession drama. (4)
Kudrin, who generally has excellent access to the President, makes the short list of potential successors. Keeping him from heightening his public profile abroad may have been a shrewd ploy in the internal struggle. Its implications for actual policy, particularly its impact on foreign investment however, could be seriously detrimental.

This succession struggle, where policy plays second fiddle to personnel, strikes at a difficult time for Russia: Its chairmanship of the G-8 should have highlighted the re-emergence of Russian international leadership. Instead, issues where westernizer/slavophile struggles seem to have significant weight, such as the continuing Iranian nuclear program (where "western-liberal" Kiriyenko was suddenly installed to oversee traditionally "siloviki" affairs) have been allowed to overshadow clear Russian policy successes. This is not yet another argument for changing the constitution to allow Putin to remain in office, but rather raises the question of whether Putin currently is strong enough to end the succession games and refocus his government on national priorities. Thus far, the creation of a council, the Public Chamber, and its assignment with tasks that duplicate the goals of the government (national priorities) suggest that Putin has given over his government to the personnel battle royale. (5)

Source Notes:

(1) "Yel'tsin signs 81 decrees and directives during his first week of leave," ITAR-TASS news agency (World Service), Moscow, in English 0858 GMT 22 Mar 94 via Lexis-Nexis.
(2) See The ISCIP Analyst, 16 Feb 06, Russian Federation: Executive Branch by Susan J. Cavan via www.bu.edu/iscip for a discussion of other uses for the creation of duplicative councils.
(3) Interview with Lilia Shevtsova, 2 Feb 06, Novaya gazeta, no. 7; Federal News Service via Leis-Nexis.
Russian Federation: Security Services
By John Kafer

FSB again leads anti-terrorism effort
Last month, Russian President Vladimir Putin issued a decree establishing the National Anti-Terrorism Committee and appointed Federal Security Services (FSB) Director, Nikolai Patrushev, as its chairman. (1) This is not the first time FSB was placed in charge of anti-terrorism efforts; Russia’s leadership seems to alternate between the Interior Ministry (MVD) and FSB taking lead on anti-terrorism efforts.

In 1997, the Interdepartmental Anti-Terrorism Commission was established to coordinate the organs of executive power in the fight against terrorism. It consisted of FSB, MVD, Ministry of Defense, Federal Government Communication Agency (FAPSI, later incorporated into FSB), the General Prosecutors Office, and the Federal Border Guard Service (later incorporated into FSB). The Commission was chaired by the Prime Minister, but in his absence, by the head of the FSB, which served to place the FSB above the other agencies. (2) Of course, this was prior to the US declared Global War on Terrorism and the associated increased emphasis on anti-terrorism efforts in Russia.

At the more operational and tactical level, Russia established Tactical Command Teams in the Southern Federal Region in 2004, headed by an Internal Troops Colonel. The teams include “united forces” with units from the Internal Troops, MVD special forces (OMON), Ministry of Defense (MOD), Civilian Defense and
Emergency Ministry. During terrorist situations, the Tactical Command Team commander becomes “head of the operational headquarters wielding power to make decisions without consultations with Moscow.” (3) Noticeably absent from the organization are FSB personnel. However, during actual terrorist situations, FSB personnel assumed leadership instead of the designated Tactical Command Teams. (4)

In February 2005, the FSB was placed in charge of counter-terrorism efforts in the Southern Federal District. As part of this effort, FSB regional directorates would command operational headquarters in order to improve integration and coordination between different agencies, particularly with the MVD. (5) Then, in July 2005, President Putin, specifically referring to counter-terrorism efforts in the Caucasus, emphasized that “the Interior Ministry remains the leading agency in dealing with terrorism” and “Tactical Command Teams were established last year,” headed by MVD officers, tasked with “coordination between security agencies.” (6)

**New National Anti-Terrorism Committee powers**

Evidently, President Putin is not satisfied with the MVD leading anti-terrorism efforts. The decree that establishes the new, FSB-led National Anti-Terrorism Commission states that it will include the most senior officials from all security and law enforcement agencies, special services, key ministries, and both houses of parliament, and authorizes 300 extra staff for the FSB head office. The commission’s federal operations headquarters will include heads of the MVD, MOD, and Emergency Ministry, all subordinate to the headquarters’ leader, a senior FSB official to be appointed by the FSB director. Additionally, the commission will have regional headquarters, with a chief appointed by regional FSB directorates. (7)

The National Anti-Terrorism Committee will have “unprecedented powers” with decisions “binding for all federal government bodies. Directives from the
commission or operations headquarters will be binding on local government bodies, and the commission will request and receive materials and information it requires from federal or regional authorities as well as non-governmental organizations. (8)

**FSB resembling KGB?**

In recent years, FSB actions increasingly seem to resemble the behavior of the Soviet KGB. The case of the British diplomat accused of espionage and links to non-governmental organizations supporting democratic reforms is the most recent example. There is also evidence of FSB doing “dirty work” in states outside of Russia, shutting down opposition websites in Kazakhstan and assisting Uzbekistan’s round up suspects following the Andijan massacre. Nearer to home, the FSB is often at the center of human rights complaints over persons vanishing in the rebellious Caucasus region. (9)

The FSB may be extending its tentacles into the military as well. In a recent interview, FSB Director, Nikolai Patrushev answered a question about the FSB’s counter-intelligence role in the Armed Forces. As part of his answer, he stated that “military counter-intelligence is part of the FSB” and “counter-intelligence agents work directly in units and subdivisions of the Army and Navy…” (10) He makes no mention of the General Staff’s Main Intelligence Department (GRU) role in military counter-intelligence, leaving unanswered the issue of GRU’s status.

**Summary**

Not surprisingly, Russia’s leadership has appointed once again the FSB to lead the National Anti-terrorism Commission. There is little doubt this will do more to further centralize control in the regions and over non-governmental organizations, than it will serve to improve anti-terrorism efforts. The new FSB-led National Anti-terrorism Committee, however, is not likely to solve the coordination problems that have plagued Russia’s security forces during crises.
Although the departments may meet at the strategic level, the various security apparatuses are not likely to integrate and professionalize their forces or command and control mechanisms sufficiently to solve coordination problems. Additionally, the MVD and MOD likely are not pleased with the FSB’s increased reach into the security affairs formerly in their domains, and therefore are not likely to increase cooperation.

On the contrary, responsibility for failure to prevent a future terrorist attack and/or respond appropriately will now fall squarely on the shoulders of the FSB. Indeed, the decree states that “efficient leadership in crisis situations will be the responsibility of regional FSB chiefs, and ultimately FSB Director” and the “head of state is not accountable for terrorism, since he isn’t a member of the National Anti-terrorism Committee.” (11) It appears President Putin has been more proactive in distancing himself from the next security failure. Of course, there is plenty of room for Patrushev to then push responsibility to the regional FSB chiefs, who, clearly, are hoping that a crisis does not present itself it their area of responsibility on their watch.

Source Notes:

(3) “Rapid Reorganization Force,” by Andrei Soldatov and Irina Borogan, Novaya gazeta, 5 Dec 05 via Lexis-Nexis.
(4) The ISCIP Analyst, Vol XII, Number 1, 27 Jan 06.
Russian Federation: Foreign Relations
By Marisa Payne

Crimes against Milosevic?
While many leaders around the world silently accepted the death of Slobodan Milosevic, the ex-Serbian leader who was standing trial at The Hague for crimes against humanity, Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov voiced his regret. In the Russian government’s first official statement regarding the death of Milosevic, the charges against whom included genocide and war crimes, Lavrov told a woeful tale:

“Slobodan Milosevic had asked to be treated in Russia because of the deterioration of his state of health…Russian doctors were prepared to give him the necessary aid and the Russian authorities guaranteed to meet all the demands of the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY)…Unfortunately, in spite of our guarantees, the tribunal did not agree to give Slobodan Milosevic the possibility of being treated in Russia.” (1).

As days passed, Russia’s resentment of the Tribunal’s February decision not to allow Milosevic to travel to Russia, despite a “100 percent state guarantee” that he would return for the remainder of his trial, turned to outrage and suspicion. Stating that he was “disturbed” by the decision not to allow Milosevic's Russian
treatment, Lavrov concluded that Milosevic was not allowed to seek treatment for his heart and high blood pressure because The Hague “didn’t believe Russia.” He continued, “In a situation where we weren’t believed, we also have the right not to believe and not to trust those who are conducting this autopsy.” (2)

Now, in an effort to regain the pride lost in their perceived slight by The Hague and amid speculation of a possible poisoning of Milosevic, Lavrov demanded that Russian officials “take part in the autopsy or at least acquaint themselves with it.” (3)

It is understandable that Russia is intent on making its voice heard regarding Milosevic, his trial and his death. Russia claims a long historical connection with Serbia, stemming from their similarities in population—both have largely Slavic and Orthodox peoples. Russia also strongly opposed the NATO bombing of Serbia in 1999. Even during the trial and despite the files of evidence against Milosevic, Russia remained a supporter of both Milosevic and Serbian actions. While introducing a Russian cardiologist to discuss Milosevic’s heart condition, a presenter on Kremlin-backed Channel 1, introduced him two ways: “Slobodan Milosevic has taken his place in history. For some he was a war criminal, while for others a symbol of resistance to foreign diktat.” (4) Perhaps even more revealing were the 300 people who protested The Hague’s decision with posters and banners reading “The Hague is a Factory of Death.” (5)

While many, including former prime minister and current Putin favorite Yevgeni Primakov, who lamented Milosevic’s death as a “personal loss,” (6) perpetuate the image of Milosevic as a committed Serbian nationalist, some in Russia dispute the official government line. Valeria Novodvorskaya, of the Democratic Union party, referred to her government’s treatment of the situation as “totally absurd,” stating on Echo Moskvy radio that Milosevic’s reasons for wanting to come to Russia went far beyond his medical condition: “He didn’t want to come
here to get better but to escape from his responsibilities in front of the Hague tribunal.” (7)

**Algerian debt-for-arms swap meet**

On March 10 President Vladimir Putin became the first Russian leader to visit Algeria, but the agreements he made with the country are nothing new. In the wake of a recent debt-for-arms swap with Syria, Putin, again, is implementing such a policy, this time with Algeria. Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov signed the agreement to write off Algeria’s US$4.737 billion debt, which has been accumulating for decades, since the Soviet Union began exporting arms to the country. (8) Russia then wasted no time making another enormous arms deal. Algeria is set to pay $7.5 billion—the price for Russia’s largest cache of arms contracts since the implosion of the Soviet Union (9)—for new weapons and warplanes, according to documents signed by Lavrov. (10)

Will Algeria be able to pay Russia for these arms? If they could not pay their debt, which was some $3 billion less than the new deal, it seems unlikely that the $7.5 billion will likely to be recovered.

But Putin’s interest in Algeria extends further than the latest arms deal, which makes Algeria Russia’s third-largest arms customer. (11) Since 2001, the countries have developed a “strategic partnership.” While talking for several hours in Algiers, Putin and Algerian President Abdelaziz Bouteflika agreed to deepen that partnership by promoting Russian companies in the Algerian marketplace. Putin stated, “A number of our companies are ready to work in the Algerian market.” Lavrov agreed, contending that Russia and Algeria have “a mutual interest in working together and coordinating their efforts on world markets.” (12)

Despite the rhetorical promotion of the private sector, Putin has promised, at least on the part of Russia, that the government will keep a close watch over
Russian-Algerian activities: “We need to ensure that the government keeps check on the implementation of these contracts and makes sure that no problems arise in the work on our side.” (13)

Source Notes:

(1) “Russia regrets Milosevic not allowed to receive treatment in Moscow,” 11 Mar 06, Agence France Presse via JRL 2006 #62.
(2) “Russian foreign minister: Moscow doesn’t trust Milosevic’s autopsy,” 13 Mar 06, Associated Press via Lexis-Nexis.
(3) Ibid.
(4) “Prominent Russian cardiologist describes Milosevic's condition,” Channel 1, 11 Mar 06, BBC Monitoring via JRL 2006 #62.
(7) “Russia regrets Milosevic not allowed to receive treatment in Moscow,” 11 Mar 06, Agence France Presse via JRL 2006 #62.
(9) “MIG JETS INSTEAD OF DEBTS; Putin returns with $7.5 billion in defense orders,” Vedomosti, 13 Mar 06, What Papers Say (WPS) via Lexis-Nexis, Translated by Elena Leonova.
(10) “Russia, Algeria sign debt, warplanes deals on Putin visit,” 10 Mar 06, Agence France Press via Lexis-Nexis.
(11) “MIG JETS INSTEAD OF DEBTS; Putin returns with $7.5 billion in defense orders,” 13 Mar 06, What Papers Say via Lexis-Nexis, Translated by Elena Leonova.
(12) “Russia, Algeria sign debt, warplanes deals on Putin visit,” 10 Mar 06, Agence France Press via Lexis-Nexis.
Russian Federation: Domestic Issues and Legislative Branch
By Robyn Angley

The Fascist specter
Manipulation of the fear of fascism is a rapidly growing political tool in contemporary Russian politics. The most recent evidence is the so called “Anti-Fascist Pact,” which purports to fight extremism and nationalism, and was signed on 20 February by United Russia, the Liberal Democratic Party (LDPR), Union of Right Forces (SPS), the Agrarian Party, Pensioners' Party, United Socialist Party of Russia, Democratic Party of Russia, People's Patriotic Party of Russia, United Industrial Party of Russia, Party for Peace and Unity and Free Russia Party. (1) Parties that refused to sign included the Communist Party, Yabloko, and Rodina (Motherland). The pact was signed during a ceremony in which members of United Russia and LDPR called for the exclusion from politics of the parties that did not sign the agreement.

In light of the utility of the specter of fascism as a popular political threat, the participation of fascist groups in the 23 February Defender of the Fatherland Day parade can only aggravate the growing polarization of political parties. Ironically, the holiday celebrating the Soviet triumph over fascism was marked by some with fascist salutes, nationalistic slogans, and the presence of neo-Nazi demonstrators. (2) The Public Chamber condemned the participation of fascist groups and called for a “legal inquiry” into the matter. (3)
Nikita Belykh, leader of SPS, sees the fascist specter as a political ploy to raise support for United Russia in the next national elections. “Today, the government needs fascists to make the electorate choose between simple things in 2007-2008: black or white, insiders or outsiders, ‘the pro-Kremlin party’ or ‘fascists,’” said Belykh. (4)

**United Russia and religion in the media**

Members of United Russia, the party devoted to giving Putin a pliant legislature, have adopted an interesting cause in the wake of the Danish cartoon scandal that insulted Muslims and raised questions about the limits of free speech and tact. In February, Abdul-Khakim Sutygov, United Russia’s religious liaison and coordinator for nationalities policy, urged Russian media to take the lead in formulating an international “journalists’ code precluding the possibility of insulting religious symbols, sacred things and believers’ feelings,” (5) an optimistic if naive notion. Now, however, one local branch of United Russia has taken an even more innovative approach to religion in the media. Rather than waiting for the outcries of a religious constituency and then reacting to potentially offensive religious content in the media, the Volgograd United Russia chapter has stepped into the vanguard of protecting religious sensibility. The problem is that no one was offended.

Gorodskiye vesti, a Volgograd daily paper, was shut down in mid-February by the mayor’s office for printing a religious cartoon. Nash Region Plus was shut down shortly afterwards for reprinting the cartoon. The sketch depicted Jesus Christ, Moses, Buddha and Mohammed watching TV. On the TV screen, two clusters of people were getting ready to fight. The caption said, “We’ve never taught them to do things like that.” (6) Outcry over the article did not come from religious organizations, but instead was spearheaded by the local branch of United Russia; Religious groups in the area did not see anything to raise a fuss about. The closure of the two newspapers raises the question of how political
parties use their organizational abilities and clout to influence, and possibly intimidate, inconvenient media.

**Far East immigration**
The widely feared and predicted resettlement of Chinese migrants on a mass scale in the Russian Far East has not taken place, in part due to visa limitations and border controls imposed by the Russian government. The Russian Far East, in particular Khabarovsk Krai and Primorskii Krai, was seen in the 1990s as being particularly vulnerable to a mass influx of Chinese immigrants. The region has a birth rate that is even lower than the (already low) Russian national birth rate. The birth rate combines with internal migration towards western Russia to yield a declining population and labor shortage in the region. These factors exacerbate the perception of mass Chinese immigration as menacing for many Russians and has produced some political rhetoric that fans the fear of being outnumbered by Chinese migrants.

The fear of a mass inflow of Chinese migrants stemmed in part from flourishing border activity in 1992-1993, when Chinese businessmen could cross the border into Russia without a visa, and Chinese imports and exports dominated the region’s economy. Visa regulations were instituted again in January 1994; the restrictions helped control the cross border flow of workers. Russia also has placed restrictions on tourist visas, limiting the amount of time that tourist groups can visit Russia and placing restrictions on where they can stay. In theory, these restrictions help control tourist activity and the activities of businessmen who come in to Russia using tourist visas, which are cheaper than the commercial visas required to conduct business in the region. In reality, the practice has helped set up a source of regular income for corrupt law enforcement officials, who accept bribes in return for extending the length of the tourist visa. (6) Nonetheless, the restrictions do seem to be slowing the rate of Chinese migration. In 1992-1993, the peak of Sino-Russian border trade, an estimated 50,000-80,000 Chinese citizens worked the region. (7) As of 2000, it was
estimated that a maximum of 40,000 Chinese worked in Khabarovsk Krai and Primorskii Krai. (8)

The primary motivation for the current Chinese migration seems to lie in contract work and cross-border trade rather than in a desire for permanent immigration to Russia. Many Chinese migrants maintain close ties to their families in China, thus strengthening the desire to engage in only temporary migration to Russia. However, the growing economic ties between the two nations probably will result in increased cross-border traffic between Russia and China.

Source Notes:

(1) “Party leaders sign anti-fascist pact,” Moscow Times, 21 Feb 06 via Lexis-Nexis.
(2) “The ‘Browns’ march on a ‘Red’ day,” What the Papers Say (WPS), 27 Feb 06 via Lexis-Nexis.
(3) “Russian advisory body wants parties punished for nationalist rallies,” Itar-Tass, 26 Feb 06; BBC Monitoring via Lexis-Nexis.
(4) “Special purpose Nazis,” Novyiye izvestia, 6 Mar 06; RusData Dialine via Lexis-Nexis.
(5) “United Russia suggests journalists code,” Itar-Tass, 7 Feb 06 via WNC; FBIS transcribed text.
(6) “Danish caricature row keeps rebounding on Russian media,” Itar-Tass, 10 March 06; FBIS transcribed text via WNC.
(8) Galina Vitkovskaia and Zhanna Zaonchkovskaia, Novaia Stolypinskaia politika na Dal’nom Vostoke Rossii, [New Stolypin Policy in the Russian Far East] in Galina Vitkovskaia and Dmitri Trenin, Perspektivy Dal’nevostochnogo regiona: mezhhstranovye vzaimosdeistviia, [Perspectives on the Far Eastern Region:
Russian Federation: Armed Forces

By Marcel LeBlanc and Jeffrey Butler

INTERNAL

Retreat from treaties?

Russian leaders are threatening to back away from long-standing treaties that have been instrumental to European stability for much of the past two decades. Over the past year, key Russian figures such as Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov, Deputy Prime Minister Sergei Ivanov, and Gen. Yuri Baluyevsky, Chief of the General Staff, have voiced displeasure with the failure of the West to ratify the amended Conventional Forces in Europe (CFE) Treaty. This dissatisfaction increasingly is finding voice in Russian threats to back out of the treaty. More recently, Russian rhetoric has expanded to include thoughts of abrogating the 1987 intermediate-range nuclear forces (INF) treaty.

Moscow publicly is questioning NATO motives behind delayed ratification of the updated CFE Treaty while NATO continues to expand its membership and influence in Eastern Europe. The CFE Treaty was originally signed in 1990 to limit NATO and Warsaw Pact conventional forces. The Treaty was amended in 1999 following the dissolution of the Soviet Union and Warsaw Pact. The updated treaty specifies troop and armament limits by country but will not go into effect until all 30 parties have ratified the agreement. (1) At present, only Belarus, Kazakhstan, Russia, and Ukraine have ratified the new treaty. NATO nations have not ratified the agreement and are not likely to do so until Russian forces withdraw from Moldova and Georgia. (2) Russia does not consider this
sufficient justification, as illustrated by Lavrov’s statement at last December’s Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) meeting, “If steps are not taken to ratify [the adapted CFE Treaty] in the very near future, we will be in danger of losing the whole regime of control over conventional arms in Europe.” (3) Moreover, Lavrov dismissed NATO’s reasons for not ratifying the treaty as “far-fetched pretexts.” (4)

Russia claims that NATO expansion into Eastern Europe exacerbates its suspicions. The most recent is the US–Romanian agreement allowing permanent basing of US troops, which is the first such arrangement with a former Warsaw Pact member. US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice signed the 6 Dec 2005 agreement that initially will host 1,500 US troops as part of a new Eastern European Task Force. (5) The US has attempted to mollify Russian concerns, while confirming the legitimacy of such agreements, “The agreement signed yesterday (6 Dec 05) is not only completely consistent with CFE obligations, it is also consistent with every declaration and every understanding that NATO has ever made with Russia.” (6)

Russia’s public response to the US basing agreement was swift and direct. One day after the agreement was signed, Ivanov stated, “the expansion of NATO and US installations up to Russia's borders calls into question the future of the treaty. Russia currently is fulfilling all its obligations under the treaty. But if we see that the other countries are ignoring it, we draw conclusions from that.” (7) More recently, Russian Deputy Chief of Staff General Aleksandr Skvortsov opined that "the CFE Treaty has lost all its value following two eastwards expansions by NATO." (8) Gen. Baluyevsky also suggested that NATO's delay in ratifying the updated CFE Treaty is motivated by a desire to ease the political restrictions in basing US troops in Bulgaria and Romania. (9)

The CFE Treaty is scheduled for a five year review in May, and the approach of this event likely will bring intensified NATO demands for Russian withdrawal from
Moldova and Georgia with reciprocal Russian demands for reduced Western meddling in its former satellite states.

While the bickering over the CFE Treaty is par for the course, Russian musings on possibly withdrawing from the INF Treaty are unexpected. Ivanov surprised US Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld with this suggestion a year ago, but no further public discussion ensued. (10) More recently, General Vladimir Vasilenko, the head of the Russian Defense Ministry's Research Institute, indicated that “Russia could consider the redeployment of intermediate-range, nuclear-capable missiles that were scrapped under the 1987 treaty.” (11) Gen. Vasilenko confirmed that he was quoted correctly and suggested that Russia had several reasons for considering redeployment of IRBMs “including the defense sector's interest in boosting the volume of state arms procurement.” (12)

These statements are somewhat surprising in that Russia appears to have little to gain by deploying IRBMs. Renewed production of IRBMs would signify a substantial reversal to disarmament trends and is likely to incur the wrath of Europe, China, and the US. Since 1987, all nations with the exception of China have dismantled their IRBM (3000 – 5000 km range) class missiles. This represents a 97% reduction from just under 800 missiles globally to China’s 20. (13) More nations possess shorter range (<3000 km) missiles, but there is no significant increase in the missile threat to Russia. (14) Moreover, while the IRBM missiles can hold European capitals hostage, they do not have the range to threaten the US mainland unlike Russia’s ICBMs which can target any nation. In addition, these missiles will provide little relief against the country’s primary threats, as highlighted by Ariel Cohen, senior research fellow at the Heritage Foundation. "Any increase in tactical or intermediate-range nuclear weapons is not going to help Russia fight Islamic radicals, ethnic conflicts, and other insurgencies." (15)
There are a few plausible reasons for Russia to reconsider IRBMs but these are not compelling. First, this could be a response to US missile defense plans. The US plans to locate a third missile defense interceptor site in Europe to complement the existing sites in Alaska and California. Poland and Ukraine are among several countries under consideration. Russian IRBMs such as the SS-20 would provide a significant challenge to the fledgling US missile defense system due to their mobility, quick burning solid-fuel rockets, low-trajectories, and short time of flight. However, Russia’s ICBM force is quite capable of overcoming the US missile defense system, and Russia has touted boldly the missile defense evading characteristics of its new Topol-M and Bulava missiles. Moreover, the US missile defense system is not designed to handle sophisticated ballistic missiles such as those possessed by Russia. Consequently, there’s little for Russia to fear from the US missile defense system. A second possible motivation is to resuscitate the Russian ballistic missile industry in anticipation of an arms race; however, proliferation of IRBM technology would be resisted by the Missile Technology Control Regime and certainly not tolerated by the US or Europe. Thus, it is not clear why Russia would overtly pursue new IRBMs.

**Single aircraft industry**

Russia initiated a significant reform in its aviation industry with a move to consolidate the major aircraft companies under a single entity, with majority state-ownership. On 21 February, President Putin signed a decree establishing the United Aircraft-Building Corporation. As stated on the Russian Presidential website:

> The Corporation is created with a view to preserve and develop the research and production potential of the Russian aviation construction industry, to ensure the state's security and defence capabilities, to pool the intellectual, industrial and financial resources for implementing prospective programmes to create technical equipment used in aviation. (16)
The United Aircraft-Building Corporation will combine Sukhoi, MIG, Tupolev, Irkut, Ilyushin and Yakovlev under one authority. (17) Furthermore, Russia plans to focus its industry on specific niche markets (regional, military, and transport) and is withdrawing from the wide-body passenger jet business, after the failure of the Ilyushin 96 that was not able to compete with Boeing and Airbus. (18) The plight of the Russian aircraft industry was highlighted when the president of Ilyushin was fired after President Putin’s plane broke down in Finland and he had to fly home on a different plane. (19) The decree mandates that the state will own no less than 75 percent of the corporation, and the merger is expected to take a year to complete.

The aircraft industry merger is the latest Russian consolidation of a major industry under state control following the Yukos affair and the rise of state-dominated Gazprom. The consolidation is a reasonable step to help the failing Russian aircraft industry much as European governments support Airbus. Russia is also wise to focus on niche sectors as the lucrative wide body commercial market is dominated by Boeing and Airbus, providing little hope that Russia could catch up for many years. Russia is far more likely to find a meaningful role in the regional jet, military, and transport markets. The Russian government also is targeting the auto and mining industries for increased state-ownership and management. (20)

Source Notes:

(3) Baise, Ibid.
(4) Ibid.
(6) Ibid.
(7) Ibid.
(11) Ibid.
(14) Ibid.
(15) Sieff, Ibid.
(19) Ibid.
(20) “Russian President Signs Decree Creating State-Controlled Aircraft Corporation,” Associated Press, 21 Feb 06 via Lexis-Nexis.

EXTERNAL
Russia uses its military footprint to counter the West
Russia lately has made some subtle and some not-so-subtle strategic decisions regarding its military forces and equipment stationed outside the borders of the Russian Federation. In Ukraine, despite appearances, the Russian Black Sea Fleet will maintain its status quo. In Belarus and in Kyrgyzstan the Russians promise to open new bases, while in Georgia they have announced their intent to close two. In part, these adjustments in Russia’s military footprint appear to be the Russian response to recent US and NATO military moves.

WESTERN REGION

Ukraine

It seems highly unlikely that the fundamentals of Russia’s strong naval presence in Ukraine will change. Even with the escalation of the Ukraine-NATO relationship, and even given the possibility that Ukraine might increase significantly the rent charged to the Russian navy in Sevastopol, the Russian military presence in Ukraine appears too valuable to jeopardize through any serious change.

Clearly, Ukrainian membership in a western military alliance inexorably moves closer to reality. Just last month Ukrainian First Deputy Foreign Minister Anton Buteiko reportedly promised that Ukraine soon will request NATO’s invitation to the alliance’s Membership Action Plan. (1) Although long a NATO Partner country, Ukraine has accelerated its drive to achieve full-fledged membership over the past few years, a fact Buteiko confirmed when he further stated that Ukraine hoped to be a NATO member by 2008. (2) This prospect of Ukraine in NATO perhaps has stifled the already contentious air surrounding Russia’s use of naval facilities and land in Ukraine.

Already a source of conflict, the Black Sea Fleet accords, by which the Russian navy is based in Ukraine, again are under review. The roots of the most recent problems ultimately can be traced to last December’s “gas war” between the two nations. (3) Indeed, when Ukrainian Deputy Foreign Minister Volodmyr Ohryzko
on 15 February, 2006 signaled Ukraine's intent to use market principles in determining rent for the Russian navy in Crimea, Ukraine seemed to be paying back Russia for its role in December’s dispute over natural gas. (4) Although both sides agreed to conduct an inventory of the Black Sea Fleet facilities and land, they also acknowledged that, regardless of the rent Ukraine decides to charge Russia and regardless of the amount Russia agrees to pay, the Russian navy is in Ukraine at least until 2017. (5)

During the course of the next decade, Russia likely will use the Black Sea Fleet as one of the major resources with which to counter a burgeoning NATO. Among many strategic considerations, Russia’s fleet in Crimea constitutes the heart of the BlackSeaFor, a naval alliance formed by the riparian Black Sea states. Although Russia ostensibly participates in NATO exercises like the Mediterranean-based Operation Active Endeavor, it uses the BlackSeaFor in part as a hedge against NATO’s naval expansion into the Black Sea. (6) At the end of February, Russia confirmed this strategy by joining hands with Turkey to reject a US proposal to move Operation Active Endeavor into the Black Sea and then a few days later by launching Active Endeavor-like exercises of its own. (7)

Belarus

With “similar strategy” Russia will expand its military presence in Belarus and it will increase already robust air defenses in that country. Russian Army General Vladimir Mikhailov, commander-in-chief of Russian Federation Armed Forces, confirmed the former during a visit to the Russian military base in Kant, Kyrgyzstan when he signaled Russia’s desire to acquire an air base in Belarus. (8) In the same fashion that Russia might hope to use its presence in Ukraine as counter to NATO expansion in the Black Sea, so too can the Russians hope that opening an air base in Belarus will oppose NATO expansion in Eastern Europe.

Belarus provides a nice buffer between the Russian Federation and NATO member (and soon-to-be-home of US military facilities), Poland. Moreover, the
Soviet-era military footprint is still fresh in Belarusian soil. During the Cold War, Belarus was home to some of the largest deployments of Soviet military hardware, particularly aircraft and aircraft support facilities. Today, much of that infrastructure and some of those aircraft remain in Belarus, although under the guise of Belarusian control.

Russian military experts speculate that Russia will choose the existing facilities near the town of Baranovichi as the first choice for basing Russian fighters and strategic bombers in Belarus. (9) Specifically, the aerodrome at Baranovichi is home to Aviation Repair Plant No. 558, which clearly seems to have the best capability for supporting the modern-day Russian Air Force. (10)

Additionally, Russia already has moved some of its most capable air defense systems into western Belarus. Two brigades of the formidable S-300 anti-aircraft missile system, NATO codenamed “S/A-10 Grumble,” and four battalions of the S-200 system, NATO codenamed “S/A-5 Gammon,” have been deployed to Belarus ostensibly to protect Russia’s western front from air strikes launched out of the Baltic States or Poland. (11) Russia also has plans to deploy at least two more battalions of S-300s to Belarus. (12) Together with the acquisition of an air base at Baranovichi for use by Russian fighters and strategic bombers, Russia’s deployment to Belarus of these robust missile systems constitutes a strong response to NATO and US encroachments in Eastern Europe.

CAUCASUS REGION

Georgia

Given Russian reaction to the threat of the West’s encroachment into the Black Sea and Eastern Europe, Russia’s recent promise to close its military bases and remove its military hardware from Georgia seems counter-intuitive. Georgia’s repeated overtures to NATO would appear to reinforce Russia’s reticence to withdraw; Yet, the location of Georgia or, rather, the presence of Russian military
bases near Georgia, creates for Russia a set of strategic considerations entirely different from what it faces in Ukraine or Belarus.

A shared northern border with Russia, a partially shared southern border with Armenia, and a western shore on the Black Sea put Georgia in the center of a triangle of Russian military bases and hardware. Consequently, Russian bases and equipment in Georgia seem redundant. Thus, after fits and starts over the past year, the Russian government reportedly signed a draft agreement that detailed and allocated funds for the closure of Russian military facilities in the Georgian towns of Akhalkalaki and Batumi. (13) Russian President Vladimir Putin must still sign the plan, which reportedly lays out the following timeline: a 31 December 2006 deadline for the evacuation of Russian military hardware in Akhalkalaki; the return to Georgia of the base in Akhalkalaki by 31 December 2007; and, less specifically, sometime in 2008 the closure of the base at Batumi and the removal of Russian forces therein. (14)

Batumi, on Georgia’s Black Sea coast, likely contributes little more to Russia’s strategic defense (or offense) than the Black Sea Fleet already provides. Moreover, Russia last year removed from Batumi a significant portion of the Russian military equipment there. (15) Thus, by promising to close this sparsely-equipped Russian base in a rather non-strategic location, Russia can lay claims to arms reduction at little military risk.

The significance of Russia’s promise to close its military facilities in Akhalkalaki seems equally unimportant. Akhalkalaki is located fewer than 40 kilometers from Armenia and fewer than 80 kilometers from Russia’s military base in the Armenian town of Gyurmi. Armenia’s long military partnership with Russia, and the annual, large-scale military exercises between the two nations make the Russian presence in Akhalkalaki seem as redundant as the one in Batumi. Given this close military partnership between Russia and Armenia and given Akhalkalaki’s proximity to Armenia, it should come as little surprise if in 2006 and
2007 Russian military forces close shop in Akhalkalaki and re-open a mere 80 kilometers away in Gyurmi.

CENTRAL ASIA
Kyrgyzstan
NATO and US military involvement in Central Asia more closely resembles that in Eastern Europe than it does that in the Transcaucasus. Not surprisingly, Russia has announced its intent, similar to that in Belarus, to expand the size of its military footprint in countries like Kyrgyzstan, where Russia already has a small presence at an air base near the town of Kant.

On 16 February 2006, Russian Deputy Security Council Secretary Yuri Zubakov announced that the Russian Defense Ministry “is beginning to upgrade [the air base in Kant, Kyrgyzstan]” by as much as 150%. (16) This Russian expansion in Kant stands in stark contrast to the situation in nearby Manas, where the US faces a 100-fold increase in the rent it pays for military operations that subsequently are threatened with extinction. (17) Portending a similar juxtaposition between US and Russian military prospects is talk of Russian desires to open another base in the southern Kyrgyz town of Osh.

There already has been public debate concerning the possibilities for Osh, located in the heart of Kyrgyzstan’s Ferghana Valley. (18) Significantly, Osh is located much closer than is Kant to NATO and US operations in Tajikistan and Uzbekistan. Osh also is close to the borders of Uzbekistan and Tajikistan, two countries where Russia would like to see its military presence blossom at the expense of the US and its allies. Opening a base and stationing as many as 1,000 Russian troops in Osh certainly would help Russia achieve this vision. (19)

Conclusion
It seems Russia is on the verge of making significant changes to its military posture around the world. Moreover, as evidenced by recent adjustments to the
Russian military footprint in Ukraine, Belarus, Georgia, and Kyrgyzstan, Russia seems very concerned with countering the US and NATO presence near its borders. If the past is a reliable guide then one should expect Russia to address its concerns by continuing to expand and adjust Russian military bases, equipment, and personnel stationed outside its borders.

Source Notes:

(1) “Ukrainian President Asks for Invitation to NATO Summit,” AM, 17 Feb 06, RFE/RL Volume 10, Number 31, Part II.
(2) Ibid.
(3) For more on the “gas war” and the lighthouse row between Ukraine and Russia, see The ISCIP Analyst, Vol. XII, No. 1, 27 Jan 06, Armed Forces: External by J.M. LeBlanc.
(5) Ibid.
(6) For more on Russia and NATO’s Operation Active Endeavor, see The ISCIP Analyst, Vol. XI, No. 4, 08 Dec 05, Armed Forces: External by J.M. LeBlanc.
(9) Ibid.
(10) www.globalsecurity.org/military/world/belarus/558arz.htm
(11) “Russia Plans Belarus Air Base to Protect Against ‘Potential’ NATO Strike,” Ibid.
(12) Ibid.
(14) “Farewell to the Slavs: The last Russian troops will leave Georgia in 2008; An update on Russia's military bases in Georgia,” Gazeta, 3 Mar 06 via JRL 2006-#54.

(15) For more on Russia's commitments to removing military equipment from Georgia in 2005, see The ISICP Analyst, Vol. XI, No. 3, 17 Nov 05, Armed Forces: External by J.M. LeBlanc.


(17) Ibid.


(19) Ibid.

Newly Independent States: Caucasus
By Kate Martin

CAUCASUS
Countries reject human rights concerns
The US Department of State issued its country reports on human rights practices this month, and the Caucasus region by and large received poor grades, although “some improvement” in Georgia and Armenia was noted. The governments of Azerbaijan and Chechnya, however, essentially rejected the evaluations and criticisms. Among the causes for concern in Azerbaijan, for instance, were the November 2005 parliamentary elections, which generated little applause among international observers. But it is not simply the refusal of the Baku government to allow any opposition to have a voice. The State Department also noted: “torture and beating of persons in custody, leading to four deaths; arbitrary arrest and detention, particularly of political opponents; harsh and life-threatening prison conditions; police impunity; lengthy pretrial detention; pervasive corruption in the judiciary” and other civil rights violations.
(1) And, just in case opposition members take heart from the West’s attention, Azerbaijani President Ilkham Aliyev issued a warning that the “export of democracy does not work…. If this is our country it is up to us to decide how to live in it and how to develop it,” he said. (2) Clearly he means the royal “us.”

Then again, he could mean members of his government administration, who appear more than willing to justify last fall’s attacks on peaceful demonstrations in the capital. Interior Minister Ramil Usubov said he disagreed with the State Department’s categorization of law enforcement actions as “violent dispersals.” “As the law invests the law enforcement agencies with the responsibility of maintaining law and order, appropriate actions against violators of order should be qualified as fitting the legal framework. Therefore it would be wrong to talk about the violation of the law of human rights in this case,” he said. (3) Given the attitude that anything law enforcement agencies do to maintain order is justified, it is unlikely that international condemnation will have any corrective effect.

Although there were some improvements in some areas, Armenia’s human rights record continued to be cause for concern. Reported human rights problems included a “seriously flawed” referendum process; security force beatings of pretrial detainees; national security service and national police force impunity; arbitrary arrest and detention; [and] poor and unhealthy prison conditions,” as well as limitations on the rights to privacy, freedom of the press, and religious freedom. (4)

In comparison to its neighbors in particular, Georgia got off somewhat lightly in the report. The State Department mentioned the improvement in the Georgian government’s human rights record, but noted continued problems in the quest for justice, including the torture, beating and abuse of detainees by law enforcement officers (although a reduction in this was noted, due to government actions); “inhumane and life-threatening prison conditions; corruption and impunity in law enforcement; arbitrary arrest and detention; [and] lack of judicial independence.”
Moreover, rights abuses in the breakaway republics of South Ossetia and Abkhazia were noted: “deprivation of life, arbitrary arrest, and detention were problems.” (5)

Elsewhere, “significant human rights problems,” particularly involving Chechnya, warranted special mention, including “alleged government involvement in politically motivated abductions, disappearances, and unlawful killing in Chechnya and elsewhere in the North Caucasus” and “widespread governmental and societal discrimination as well as racially motivated attacks against ethnic minorities.” Human rights abuses by anti-government forces also were noted, such as “killing and intimidating local heads of administration” and “involvement in both terrorist bombings and politically motivated disappearances in Chechnya and Ingushetia during the year.” (6)

Chechnya also heard from the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, Louise Arbour, who noted the atmosphere of fear created by the republic’s legal system. Arbour said she was concerned “by use of torture in obtaining confessions or information, and by threats against those who complain about officials,” (7) President Alu Alkhanov downplayed Arbour’s allegations. “Torture and violence by interrogators take place all over the world. Probably our rate is one or two percentage points above the average, due to the well-known events,” he said. (8)

**CHECHNYA**

**Because he cares**

Last month’s announced suspension of Danish humanitarian organizations, according to then-acting Chechen Prime Minister Ramzan Kadyrov, was for their own good. “After what they did with regard to the Prophet in that country, I am irritated by the very word Denmark. Let them say that I’m acting incorrectly in legal terms…. But I will do everything to get these organizations out of Chechnya…. I don’t rule out the possibility that members of Danish organizations could have been lynched…. So my decision might have been good for the
Danes themselves. The Danes should even thank me,” Kadyrov explained. (9) Later, however, Kadyrov had a change of heart; either that, or thank-you cards were pouring in from Copenhagen, an unlikely event. On 27 February, he announced the Danish Refugee Council could resume operations in Chechnya. (10)

GEORGIA
Who’s sorry now?
For a while it appeared as though the separatist movements in Georgia may have been the result of tensions exacerbated by a powerful neighbor interested in annexing as much “newly independent” territory as possible, while perhaps creating a destabilizing effect in Tbilisi. But the leaders of these breakaway republics confirmed another, significant, motivation in the continuation of conflict both armed and verbal: the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, and, more particularly, Georgian aspirations for membership.

Indeed, Abkhazia’s leadership – its self-proclaimed president, Sergei Bagapsh, as well as its vice president, parliamentary speaker, prime minister, and political party leaders – signed a statement asserting Abkhaz preparedness in the face of “Georgia’s possible military aggression.” The evidence of that aggression: training in line with NATO standards, and an increase in Georgia’s military budget (a NATO requirement). (11) That training shows no sign of stopping: The chief of staff of Georgia’s armed forces, Levan Nikoleishvili, reported that currently Georgia has one infantry brigade that complies with NATO standards, a second getting close, and a third that will begin training in the summer. (12) Accession to NATO remains one of Georgia’s highest goals, and army training is seen as a critical part of the plan. A recently released “Vision of priorities and goals for 2006” by the Georgian Defense Ministry includes the disbanding of the General Staff, to be replaced by the Joint Staff with officials from all branches of the military; as well as the development of an effective mobilization system and of 20 well-equipped and well-trained battalions. (13)
Instability within and near a country’s borders has slowed the process in the past, as the Baltic States’ situation demonstrated several years ago. Georgia’s Minister of State for European Integration, Giorgi Baramidze, said hopefully that NATO entry should not depend on the settlement of internal conflicts, which several parties seem intent on inflaming. “It is important for NATO to ensure that the process is dynamic and proceeds in the right direction,” he said, “NATO positively assesses our steps in this direction and does not demand that the conflicts should necessarily be settled immediately.” (14)

Meanwhile, Georgian President Mikheil Saakashvili has backpedaled a bit as concerns the parliamentary resolution demanding the replacement of Russian peacekeepers by international (read: Western) units; that demand’s timeline, he said, was flexible, and “provides all parties, including Russia, with the chance to sit at the negotiating table and resolve the problems through negotiations.” (15) It would not be a stretch to assume that such a retreat from earlier rhetoric was prompted by telephone calls from the West.

But if Tbilisi is being advised to ratchet down its stance, the other parties appear to be getting quite different advice. South Ossetian leader Eduard Kokoity told Russian journalists that South Ossetia would react violently to the inclusion of Western forces in the conflict zone. “[W]e will regard all other formations – under whatever aegis, except for the Russian peacekeepers – as aggressors and will eliminate them, anyone who comes here, except the Russian peacekeepers. These countries have no moral right to take any part in our peacekeeping process because, we all know very well, all of them are on Georgia’s side. They are supporting Georgia militarily, they are arming Georgia, not with defensive weapons but with offensive weapons.” (16) Well, we can’t have the scales tipped, now, can we, particularly in the face of the quadripartite/bipartite Joint Control Commission, which pits Georgia against (nearly Russian) South Ossetia, (Russian) North Ossetia, and Russia.
Despite recent reports that Georgia plans to demilitarize the conflict zone in South Ossetia unilaterally, its opponents are clear they will not mirror that activity. “Abkhazia and South Ossetia cannot disarm unilaterally and create demilitarized zones while Georgia is ready to enter NATO. … Quite the contrary, we must do all to be able to parry adequately any aggression,” said Abkhazia’s “foreign minister,” Sergei Shamba. (17)

Source Notes:

(1) http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/hrrpt/2005/.
(2) ITAR-TASS, 8 Mar 06; OSC Transcribed Text via WNC.
(3) Interfax, 11 Mar 06; OSC Transcribed Text via WNC.
(4) http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/hrrpt/2005/.
(5) Ibid.
(6) Ibid.
(7) RIA-Novosti, 24 Feb 06; OSC Translated Text via WNC.
(8) ITAR-TASS, 28 Feb 06; OSC Transcribed Text via WNC.
(9) Interfax, 13 Feb 06; OSC Transcribed Excerpt via WNC.
(10) ITAR-TASS, 27 Feb 06; OSC Transcribed Text via WNC.
(11) Interfax, 16 Feb 06; OSC Transcribed Text via WNC.
(12) Interfax, 18 Feb 06; OSC Transcribed Text via WNC.
(13) Agentstvo voyennykh novostey, 7 Mar 06; OSC Transcribed Text via WNC.
(14) Nezavisimaya gazeta, 9 Mar 06; OSC Translated Text via WNC.
(15) Interfax, 18 Feb 06; OSC Transcribed Text via WNC.
(16) Rustavi-2 Television, 18 Feb 06; OSC Translated Text via WNC.
(17) ITAR-TASS, 7 Mar 06; OSC Transcribed Text via WNC.
Kazakhstan Update: The lady doth protest too much!

On December 4 last year, the Republic of Kazakhstan held its Presidential elections. During the course of the campaign, it became clear that President Nursultan Nazarbaev and his supporters had graduated from their normal intimidation tactics, including the destruction of campaign materials and verbal warnings regarding “illegal” campaigning, (1) to serious crimes such as murder and kidnapping.

First, in early November, Yelena Nikitna, a campaign official for Nazarbaev’s most ‘serious’ challenger, Zarmakhan Tuyakbai, reported her daughter missing. Nikitna claimed that her daughter Oksanna had disappeared after her mother refused to cooperate with the authorities’ demands that she act as a mole inside Tuyakbai’s camp. (2) At the time of writing, Oksanna Nikitna apparently is still missing.

On the weekend of 13 November, Zamanbek Nurkadilov, a former government minister and political ally of President Nazarbaev, was found dead at his home in Almaty. An Interior Ministry investigation into his death returned a suicide ruling, apparently due to the fact that Nurkadilov’s home showed no signs of forced entry. Given Nurkadilov’s wounds—two shots to the chest, one to the head—the ‘suicide’ ruling was spurious at best. The Nurkadilov assassination also begged the question, “cui bono?” In light of the fact that Nurkadilov possessed documents proving “massive corruption” (3) in the President’s family which he was threatening to release — it is likely that the assassination was ordered at the highest levels.

A month ago, on 11 February, Altynbek Sarsenbayev, co-Chairman of the opposition Ak Zhol Party, and former Information Minister, was reported missing. Three days later, Sarsenbayev’s body, along with those of his driver and bodyguard, were found on the outskirts of Almaty. Although the Almaty police
force refused to confirm any details, Aydos Sarymov, an aide to Sarsenbayev stated that Sarsenbayev had been shot in the head twice, and been found with his hands bound behind his back. (4)

On February 14, For a Just Kazakhstan, one of the country’s major opposition groups, held a press conference, during which Zharmakhan Tuyakbai spoke about the murder. Tuyakbai insisted that Sarsenbayev had been “neutralized” because of his “intellect and political talent,” and because he “might cause discomfort for the authorities.” (5)

In comparison to the relative lack of publicity given to Nurkadilov’s murder last November, Sarsenbayev’s death has provided the government with a headache. Nurkadilvo’s ‘neutralization’ took place in an environment away from public view—namely his house—which the Security Services could easily insulate from the public, giving them time to cover their tracks, and provide an (albeit) thin layer of legality to the suicide ruling. Sarsenbayev’s murder was brutal, and apparently ‘public.’ The manner of the discovery of his body leaves two possibilities open: Either his murder was intended as a harsh signal to the opposition, or the killers, for whatever reason, were forced to rush their job, not having time to complete the requisite cover-up operation.

On 20 February, five days after Sarsenbayev’s funeral, Interior Minister Baurzhan Mukhamedjanov claimed that five suspects had been arrested and had confessed to the killing. (6) A day later, the KNB, Kazakhstan’s successor to the KGB, announced through its press service that the five men were members of the elite “Arystan” (equivalent to Russia’s Alpha Team) unit. (7) A sixth individual, Erzhan Utembaev, the Kazakh Senate’s chief of administration, was arrested and quickly, according to authorities, confessed to masterminding and ordering Sarsenbayev’s murder on the grounds of “long-lasting personal enmity.” (8)
If Utembaev is indeed the mastermind of Sarsenbayev’s murder, several questions arise, namely, who really controls the country’s Special Forces, and were the five killers acting on the orders of KNB Chief Nartai Dutbayev, or as part of a splinter group beyond his control? If the latter is the answer, then Nazarbaev does not control the Security Services, and is himself in danger from such a splinter group. Indeed, this is the line taken by the regime.

In spite of the evidence suggesting simply the removal of a Presidential opponent, great pains have been taken to insist that Sarsenbayev’s murder was part of a greater plan to subvert the government and topple the President. The President’s daughter Dariga Nazarbaeva has played a central role in making this case. First, on the same day Utembayev was arrested, Nazarbaeva (who was leader of the pro-Presidential Asar Party) called for the resignation of the KNB’s Chief (accepted a day later by the President), and the disbandment of Arystan. (9) Secondly, Nazarbaeva, in a statement issued on 23 February, claimed that Sarsenbayev’s murder constituted an “attempt at political assassination on the President…and a carefully and skillfully planned operation to discredit President Nursultan Nazarbaev and the entire existing system of state authority.” (10) Moreover, she insisted that the involvement of Special Forces troops suggested that “very influential forces” were behind the killing. Nazarbaeva’s last statement is ironic at best because she herself is not above suspicion.

During the summer of 2005, Sarsenbayev made a number of serious allegations, including corruption, against Nazarbaeva, claiming that the violations occurred during her purchase of Khabar, the country’s most powerful media group. Nazarbaeva sued, and Sarsenbayev was ordered to pay a fine for slandering the company. (11) As such, the two were enemies. The allegations against Nazarbaeva over Sarsenbayev’s death apparently have become so multiple and vocal, that she has threatened legal action against the publishers of such “libelous reports” no matter where they are published. (12) Events in the last
week suggest that the Kazakh government is intent on pursuing its ‘coup’ story—probably because it has no other choice.

On 10 March, Nazarbaeva launched a further, escalated attack on the Security Services, claiming that they were, as a whole, in league with the opposition, and were launching an “information war” against the President’s family. (13) During the same interview, Nazarbaeva (quite possibly by mistake) claimed that during his meeting with the President, KNB Chief Dutbayev told Nazarbaev that a member of his family had ordered the assassination without revealing who the guilty party was. (14) Dutbayev likely was forced to resign for two reasons: firstly as ‘punishment’ for the botched assassination attempt, but most importantly, to discredit any future attempt by Dutbayev to ‘go public’ with his information by placing responsibility for the murder squarely on the shoulders of ‘rogue’ elements of the KNB. At this point, it seems safe to conclude that Utembayev’s arrest is designed to provide the government with a ‘patsy’ to take the fall for the murder, and that Nazarbaeva’s ever more frantic accusations constitute a classic example of “the lady doth protest too much.”

Uzbekistan update: Hefty prison sentences for opposition leadership
Last fall, in what was a direct result of the events in Andijan, the Uzbek government launched a concerted campaign against one of the nation’s major opposition groups, the Sunshine Coalition. On 22 October, the National Security Service arrested Sanjar Umarov, the movements’ leader. Until his arrest, Umarov was one of President Islam Karimov’s most vocal critics, issuing a number of calls for the dissolution of the government, and for far-reaching democratic reforms. Umarov also had issued what amounted to a direct challenge to the President, when he announced his intention to run against Karimov in the 2007 election. (15) A number of weeks after Umarov’s arrest, Uzbek Security Forces arrested the Sunshine Coalition’s “coordinator,” Nodira Khidoyatova, when she arrived in Tashkent after a trip to Moscow.
Several days after their separate trials began, the Uzbek Prosecutor’s office issued a statement insisting that “Sanjar Umarov and his criminal group” were being tried for economic rather than political crimes. (16) Specific charges against Umarov and Khidoyatova included embezzlement, tax evasion and fraud. In light of the Sunshine Coalition’s political activities, the Prosecutor’s statement could not be taken at face value. The financial charges were probably used to avoid allegations of ‘undemocratic’ activity being leveled against the Karimov government.

On March 1 and 6, the judges in the respective cases reached verdicts, with Khidoyatova receiving a 10 year prison sentence, while Umarov was sentenced to 14½ years (which was reduced by a fourth under the recent amnesty law). (17) Delivering his verdict, Judge Zorkirjon Isaev stated that Umarov “headed an organized criminal group,” which had successfully conspired to inflict “large economic losses to the interests of Uzbekistan.” (18)

Both Umarov’s and Khidoyatova’s lawyers have announced their intention to appeal the verdicts, but it should be stated that attempts to overturn the convictions will likely be unsuccessful, given the current atmosphere in Uzbekistan. Although there has been no indication of such moves so far, it is possible that the Uzbek government will allow the two to leave the country as exiles, in order to appear “humanitarian.” What is certain is that the Uzbek government will continue its anti-opposition activities in order to ‘clear the decks’ ahead of next year’s Presidential election.

Source Notes:

(1) See The ISCIP Analyst, Volume XII, Number 1 (27 Jan 06).

(2) Ibid.

(3) Ibid.
(4) "Kazakhstan: Opposition Figure Found Shot Dead Near Almaty," RFE/RL Features Article, 13 Feb 06 via www.rferl.org/featuresarticle/2006/2/0C2B8F56-79F6-447A-B66F-5E41C199689A.html.


(7) ITAR-TASS, 21 Feb 06; OSC Transcribed Text via World News Connection.


(9) "Kazakhstan: Opposition Figure Found Shot Dead Near Almaty," RFE/RL Features Article, 13 Feb 06 via www.rferl.org/featuresarticle/2006/2/0C2B8F56-79F6-447A-B66F-5E41C199689A.html.


(12) Ibid.


(14) AP Worldstream, 10 March 2006 via www.search.ft.com/searchArticle?id=060310005211&query=Nazarbayeva&vsc_appId=totalSearch&offset=0&resultsToShow=10&vsc_subjectConcept=&vsc_companyConcept=&state=More&vsc_publicationGroups=TOPW&searchCat=1.
Newly Independent States: Western Region

By Tammy Lynch

UKRAINE

Freedom of Choice

The election campaign of 2006

In the Orange Revolution of 2004, Ukrainian citizens rose up to demand justice and truth: They demanded that an overtly rigged presidential election be overturned and their opinions counted. And they won. This year, as Ukrainians prepare to vote in the first parliamentary election since their revolution, they do so in a new atmosphere of freedom and fairness. While many voters may be disappointed that, following the revolution, change didn’t come as quickly as they anticipated in a number of areas, the parliamentary campaign of 2006 clearly demonstrates the impressive level of political freedom and debate that has blossomed in Ukraine in just over one year.

In 2004, then-presidential candidate Viktor Yushchenko was refused time to advertise or appear on the primarily state-controlled Ukrainian media. He was routinely attacked by “journalists,” as numerous dubious, intensely negative
“documentaries” appeared all over Ukraine’s television channels. At the same time, Yushchenko was refused permits to hold rallies, denied airplane landing rights to campaign in certain regions, followed by security service personnel, threatened, and finally, poisoned.

Those supporting Yushchenko were bullied, subjected to “investigations” by tax and police officials, followed, and, along with Yushchenko, placed under a constant state of siege. Media found to be critical of the administration in power simply were shut down, journalists were threatened (threats which were taken seriously given the earlier murder of journalist Georgiy Gongadze and the disappearances of several others), and an atmosphere of oppression prevailed against those not supportive of the regime in power.

Alternatively, Yushchenko’s opponent, then-Prime Minister Viktor Yanukovich – the chosen successor of President Leonid Kuchma – was praised at every turn on Ukrainian television and radio, and in state controlled newspapers. Certain journalists were rewarded for their support of Yanukovich, as most news distribution followed restrictive orders issued directly from the presidential administration (there were, of course, brave exceptions). Yanukovich received massive assistance from the state apparatus in holding rallies and “contacting” voters, state workers were threatened with the loss of jobs if they did not vote for him, and students were told they would lose their stipends and housing. Moreover, this assistance continued throughout the now-discredited first round of voting.

My, how things have changed.

In 2006, advertisements for parties taking part in the parliamentary elections – even those overtly opposing President Yushchenko – appear regularly on all media outlets without restriction. Candidates travel, hold rallies and appear on media talk programs without problem or constraint. Although some candidates
have complained of obstruction by officials at the local and regional level, complaints are aired loudly, and generally, problems are corrected. Even in Donetsk, the region of the country with the highest level of election fraud and violence in 2004, and the region where officials still cling to many of the old ways, candidates from all parties are allowed – if not welcomed – to campaign and speak to the press.

During one week on Ukrainian television, viewers could watch hour-long press conferences with former revolution leader and prime minister Yulia Tymoshenko, who is running separately from Yushchenko’s Our Ukraine party in these elections, Socialist Party leader and former Orange Revolution partner Oleksandr Moroz, and Prime Minister Yuriy Yekhanurov, the political leader of Our Ukraine. Additionally, they could see lengthy interviews with the leaders of the smaller PORA and Viche parties, a political debate on possible parliamentary coalitions, regular news reports on the activities of all parties, and enough political advertising to irritate even seasoned Western political analysts.

In fact, so many parties have bought advertising (47 are running) that state-controlled Channel 1 is running at least five minute-long blocs of political advertising several times each hour. Cursory observation suggests that Yanukovich’s Party of Regions has purchased the largest amount of advertising time, and unlike what happened to candidate Yushchenko in 2004, all channels are running these advertisements.

On Independence Square, the site of the largest Orange Revolution protests in 2004, all parties can, and often do, maintain booths to distribute campaign material, and on weekends, set up small soundstages to conduct rallies. There is no greater sign of the new freedom in the country than the fact that on 11 March, Yanukovich’s Party of Regions held a rally for hundreds of voters almost on the same site where hundreds of thousands protested against him slightly more than
one year earlier. The rally was not obstructed, not watched by security personnel videotaping attendees, and not barred from coverage by the media.

This is particularly impressive given that Yanukovich seems poised to win the greatest number of seats in the next parliament (25-30%). President Yushchenko and those around him have not responded as most leaders of the former Soviet Republics have done when faced with similar political challenges, rather they simply have campaigned harder, and challenged Yanukovich to debates. They have accepted that – as during the third round of the 2004 presidential election when Yanukovich received 44% of the votes – there is a portion of the citizenry that supports the former Prime Minister's pro-Russia, anti-NATO program. In other words, they have responded as any Western political party would do.

There are, of course, individuals within Our Ukraine who have suggested that Yanukovich should not be allowed to run in this election, because past crimes committed in his youth and his alleged involvement in 2004’s election fraud should disqualify him. Yushchenko, however, has shied away from this idea, as he has shied away from pursuing Kuchma for his past alleged crimes (including alleged involvement in the murder of Gongadze). For better or for worse, Yushchenko has chosen to allow his opponents to rehabilitate themselves. Perhaps this is not the justice demanded during the orange revolution, but it is freedom – and a level of freedom unknown in that part of the world.

It is also worth highlighting that President Yushchenko and Our Ukraine face challenges not only from Yanukovich but from his former revolution partner, Yulia Tymoshenko. A poll released on 10 March by the respected Democratic Initiatives Foundation found Yanukovich with 30.4%, Yushchenko’s Our Ukraine Bloc at 17.1% and the Yulia Tymoshenko Bloc with 16.9% of voter support. Yushchenko’s decision to break from Soviet and post-Soviet electioneering practices has allowed his party to face the possibility of placing third in the
election, but should also prove to his citizens – and the West – that it is possible to hold a fair and free election in the former Soviet region.

Problems faced on election day
The poll itself will present additional problems for the government, as the country implements new laws and procedures designed to limit fraud and increase accountability. Most observers agree with the government’s own assessment that the sheer volume of choices faced by voters will mean long lines and an exceptionally long vote counting period. The national parliamentary ballot will have 47 party choices and be so long that it will not fit on the table provided to mark it. Moreover, voters could receive up to an additional four ballots, as they vote simultaneously for the first time in regional, municipal, district and local elections. Parties on each ballot may be different and in a different order than on the national parliamentary ballot. Needless to say, voters will have more choice than they thought possible in 2004, and election workers who likely have never participated in a free election will face counting challenges.

There is little worry, however, of vote tampering or rigging. Yushchenko’s message of non-interference seems to have been clearly delivered to election workers. These workers complain that they are afraid to make mistakes for fear of being charged with fraud. This fear has contributed to difficulty filling election positions throughout the country, but it speaks volumes about the tone being set by the presidential administration.

Coalition building
Whether the pluralism of a campaign can be carried over into a pluralistic, diverse, and inclusive government also is a major test for this new Western-oriented government.

The incoming parliament will be tasked by new constitutional amendments with creating a majority coalition and choosing a prime minister and cabinet.
Previously, the president named the prime minister, who was then confirmed by parliament. Now, the country has moved in the direction of a parliamentary republic (although the president will maintain more power than most presidents possess under this form of government).

Numerous majority coalition scenarios exist, including agreements between Yanukovich and Yushchenko and between Yushchenko and Tymoshenko. Should the parliament fail to reach a majority coalition agreement within 30 days after opening its session, the president has the right to disband the body and call new elections. It is unclear whether this is a scenario being considered by Yushchenko, but it is hard to believe that the president would embrace this idea over a coalition with his former partners, especially following a difficult campaign, having made such progress on political freedom and with such unpredictable consequences.

It is also hard to believe that Yushchenko would choose to unite with former Prime Minister Yanukovich, the man who was complicit in the oppression of him and his associates in 2004. Even more, Yanukovich leads a party that voted in 2005 to oppose joining NATO, oppose reforms needed to join the WTO, oppose joining the EU without a special agreement with Russia, and oppose anti-monopoly free-market reforms that might have threatened the control some party members hold in certain industries. Clearly, Yushchenko has many decisions to make in the next month or two.

Also clearly, Ukraine has come far in slightly over one year. The atmosphere on the streets is cautious but hopeful, and the campaign resembles some of the most hotly contested in the West. For over one year, Viktor Yushchenko has said that his country is part of Europe. And there can be no doubt that the president has given Ukrainians two of their most important demands during the revolution, and two of the fundamental rights of European nations – the freedom to choose
their own political leaders and the freedom to learn about them from an uncensored press.

BELARUS
Terror in the heart of Europe
On 19 March, Belarusians will “vote” in what President Aleksandr Lukashenko is calling an election. But, there should be no mistake, the actions of the Lukashenko regime make it clear that the poll taking place in Belarus resembles nothing close to a real election.

Opponents of Lukashenko are regularly harassed; they are not allowed to hold rallies; they are investigated by police; they are beaten; and they are arrested. The media is entirely censored, election observers are arrested or deported. The atmosphere provides no choice – except that imposed by the government.

For example:

-- On 15 March, Anatoly Lebedko, the head of opposition candidate Aleksandr Milinkevich's election campaign and a prominent activist, was arrested by Belarusian authorities.

-- On 2 March, opposition presidential candidate Aleksandr Kozulin was violently arrested when he tried to attend a congress being held by President Lukashenko. While trying to record his arrest for broadcast, a Reuters television correspondent was beaten. A dozen reporters were arrested later near the police station where Kozulin was being held; in the process, Oleg Ulevich, a Komsomolskaya pravda correspondent based in Belarus, was hospitalized with a concussion and a broken nose.

Kozulin and the reporters were released after several hours detention. Kozulin, however, was suffering from a concussion and had noticeable bruising (1)
-- Also on 2 March, Siarhei Liashkevich, head of the Shchuchyn city campaign office of opposition presidential candidate Aleksandr Milinkevich was arrested. Police searched Liashkevich’s apartment, and confiscated all computers and documents. Authorities say he could face up to three years in jail for “preparation of a mass riot.” (2)

-- On 9 March, Vinstuk Vyachorka, the deputy head of Milinkevich’s campaign and the man tasked with outreach to the international community, was sentenced to 15 days in jail for “organizing an illegal rally.” He was arrested following a campaign appearance by Melinkevich, at which 1,000 people reportedly gathered. (3)

In court, Vyachorka was defiant, despite reportedly rough treatment by police (fellow party members who tried to contact him on his mobile phone directly after his arrest said he answered but then they heard nothing but scuffling and yelling by police). He said, “There are no legal possibilities left for us to continue our work in the future. We need to learn to live as dissidents in Cuba -- prepare ourselves for more serious, more basic forms of struggle.” Along with Vyachorka, two other Melinkevich activists were jailed. (4)

-- On 21 February, authorities raided a meeting of the Belarusian election monitoring and civic advocacy organization Partnership. The group had intended to monitor the presidential election for irregularities, as it had previous elections in Belarus and throughout the former Soviet region. Four members of the group, including its leader, were arrested and remain in custody without trial under a charge of holding “an illegal meeting.”

Because the group received training in election observation from US-based NGOs, the Belarusian KGB (yes, it is still proudly called this), also charged that the organization was fomenting revolution on behalf of the United States. In
statements at the Center for Strategic and International Studies in Washington DC, Assistant Secretary of State for European and Eurasian Affairs Daniel Fried called these accusations “fanciful and frankly absurd,” adding, “This is Soviet-style in its absurdity.” (5)

-- On 14 March, authorities deported a group of Danish and Swedish election monitors. (6)

-- Also, on 14 March, authorities arrested a journalist for Ukraine's TV 5 Kanal, who was literally in the midst of a live telephone broadcast as she was physically grabbed by police. During her broadcast, which was carried on all major Ukrainian news stations following her arrest, Hanna Gorozhenko can be heard screaming that the police were attempting to enter the vehicle from which she was broadcasting. Shortly thereafter, a scuffle is heard and the phone cuts off. Gorozhenko remains in custody, and another TV 5 Kanal crew that tried to enter Belarus was turned back at the border. (7)

-- On 13 March, three Ukrainian student activists were sentenced to ten days in Belarusian prison after attending what authorities called an “illegal rally.” (8)

-- On March 1, the Deputy Head of Melinkevich’s Hrodna city campaign, Vadzim Saranchukou, was arrested for “petty hooliganism” He was kept in custody for five days and then released on 6 March. Melinkevich’s representatives suggest he was arrested to undermine a planned meeting of Melinkevich with voters in Hrodna on 4 March. (9)

-- On 7 March, a town court in Mahilyou sentenced Melinkevich’s regional campaign manager Uladzimir Shantsau to fifteen days in jail for “holding an unsanctioned rally.” However, Shantsau was forced to hold the rally outdoors, after the hall where he had been sanctioned to hold the event was suddenly unavailable to him. The same court fined Milinkevich ally Anatol Lyabedzka $750
for the same offense. Although Lyabedzka had permission from authorities to hold the rally inside the local university, at the last moment, he was not allowed inside – forcing him outside and in technical violation of the law. (10)

-- As authorities cracked down on current opposition leaders, last week, former parliamentary deputy and opposition activist Sergei Skrebets, who has served approximately one year of a 2.5-year prison sentence, was transferred to the hospital because of the “deterioration of his health.” Skrebets used his position as a deputy to oppose Lukashenko for four years before his arrest. He is but one of over a dozen opposition politicians and journalists who have disappeared, mysteriously died or been imprisoned in the last several years.

Given the attacks on Belarusian opposition candidates, campaigners, journalists and observers, it is clear that the election cannot be deemed either free or fair. This is underscored by violations already reported during the “early voting” period, which began on 15 March. While this period is said to allow voters who cannot do so on election day to cast their ballots, it also provides the opportunity for voters to cast their ballot repeatedly over many days.

So, what will the US or the EU do about it? Following Vyachorka’s arrest, Senator Sam Brownback, Chairman of the US Congressional Helsinki Commission, which is one of the most outspoken and consistent critics of Lukashenko, said, “Authorities that engage in attempts at intimidation, electoral abuse or violence will face repercussions from the international community.” (11) Additionally, US Deputy Assistant Secretary for European and Eurasian Affairs at the State Department David Kramer recently suggested that Belarus “should not underestimate the reaction of the US government” to election rigging and violence against protesters. (12)

However, Belarus already is isolated, with various sanctions in place against it and travel bans on most of its leaders. It appears unlikely that further negative
remarks, threats or sanctions from Western governments will sway Lukashenko, especially since he receives considerable support from his partner, Russia. For every criticism levied at Belarus and Lukashenko, Russia responds with support. Just a week ago, Russian Prime Minister Mikhail Fradkov arrived in Belarus to meet with Lukashenko. His visit, like the earlier visit of Vladimir Putin, must have given the Belarusian president comfort as he faces Western condemnation.

Belarus also avoids the negative economic effects of its isolation thanks to massive Russian subsidies of oil, gas and food products, among other categories.

Most important, last year, the Bratislava-based Pontis Foundation completed an examination of Belarus’ energy market in relation to its economy, and 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. Russia’s agreement to maintain Belarusian gas and oil prices at between 40 to 50 dollars per cubic meter (as opposed to, for example, the $230 the country charges Ukraine), is the main reason that Lukashenko can maintain power and avoid the economic reforms that would bring his country closer to Western standards.

Therefore, significant and consistent pressure on Russia to end its support for Lukashenko could drastically improve the lives of Belarusians and end the reign of terror of the Belarusian president.

The Pontis Foundation also suggested that in order to impact Lukashenko’s actions, oil exports from Belarus 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.” (13)
A freezing of oil exports, or at least a pegging of the price to that paid by Belarus to Russia, likely would be welcomed by Poland, as well as Lithuania, which has worked steadfastly to support independent media in Belarus. Additionally, Ukraine has signaled its willingness to support such an initiative by joining all recent EU statements criticizing Belarus.

Without this or similar action, threats against Lukashenko show little chance of having an effect. The “last dictator in Europe” has shown little fear of the West, and has been protected by Russia in the East. Only a strike at the funds that allow him to maintain his hold on the country – and the lifestyle he enjoys – seems likely to have any possibility of success.

Source Notes:

(1) Charter97.org, 17:31 CET, 8 Mar 06.
(2) Charter97.org, 11:13 CET, 6 Mar 06.
(4) RFE/RL, 10 Mar 06 via www.rfefl.org.
(6) Agence France Presse, 17:52 EST, 15 Mar 06 via Yahoo! News.
(7) TV 5 Kanal news broadcasts; some information available via www.5tv.com.ua.
(8) TV 5 Kanal via www.5tv.com.ua.
(9) Charter97.org, 6 Mar 06.
(10) RFE/RL, 10 Mar 06 via www.rferl.org.
(13) EUObserver.com, 30 September 2005; via Lexis-Nexis.

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