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**THE ISCIP ANALYST**  
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**Russian Federation: Executive Branch**

By Susan Cavan

**PRESIDENCY**

**Yel'tsin finally confirms daughter's status**

On June 30, President Yel'tsin appointed his daughter, Tatiana Dyachenko, as presidential adviser and image maker. Acknowledging her role on last year's campaign staff and her continuing advisory role, Dyachenko remarked that the appointment gave her an official status and "put an end to certain awkwardness." (ITAR-TASS, 30 Jun 1997)

Dyachenko's position in the president's entourage has received a great deal of attention in the press over the past year. Her critical-moment intervention following the arrest of campaign staffers Yevstafyev and Lisovsky (see previous digests) led to Yel'tsin's decision to fire Kremlin hardliners Barsukov and Korzhakov. Her constant presence near the president (she has even begun accompanying him on foreign trips) reinforces her image as a filter of information and contacts for Yel'tsin. With this appointment, Dyachenko becomes part of the presidential administration and "structurally" answerable to Chief of Staff Valentin Yumashev.

**Yel'tsin election anniversary address**

Calling the year since his election as president of the Russian Federation the "most difficult year of his life," Yel'tsin noted the hardships facing the country, but promised that prosperity is "just around the corner." (RIA-Novosti, 3 Jul 97) In this election anniversary radio address, Yel'tsin also claimed that production would increase in the coming year and promised to focus on the public health system and military reform.

In what may be a signal that he has reached a decision not to dissolve the Duma, despite persistent rumors, Yel'tsin claimed "I've also started trying more insistently to come to terms with the State Duma, which had provoked the President for a long time. Previously, I would have exploded and dealt a smashing punch. But, right now, I've launched a calm discussion with the Duma in a bid to find a way out of the situation." While many still believe a confrontation with the Duma is likely, it is possible that negotiations, most likely between Chernomyrdin's NDR and Zyuganov's Communist Party, will forestall a dissolution of the current Duma.

### **A friendship revived?**

Moskovsky komsomolets (5 Jun 97) is reporting that President Yel'tsin recently dined with old friend and former FSB head Barsukov and thanked him for foregoing the noisy Korzhakov route of disgruntled employees. Barsukov has avoided comment on his dismissal or any Kompromat he may have on leading political figures apparently in the hopes of returning to Kremlin service. While this may appear overly optimistic with the Chubais faction so clearly ascendant, Barsukov would certainly be aware of the president's inclination to surround himself with a balance of viewpoints, especially in the form of good friends.

### **New book from former guard**

Former Korzhakov deputy in the Presidential Security Services, Col. Valeri Streletsky, has published a memoir. In addition to discussing corruption in the Kremlin, Streletsky revisits the Lisovsky-Yevstafyev arrests. Excerpts recently appeared in Pravda-5. For a discussion of his earlier comments about the affair, see previous digests.

## **GOVERNMENT**

### **Kovalev out, Stepashin back in the spotlight**

Justice Minister Valentin Kovalev, pressured out of office following the publication of a steamy sauna video purportedly of him and some female companions, has been replaced by the irrepressible Sergei Stepashin. (Segodnya, 3 Jul 97) Stepashin was Barsukov's predecessor as head of the Federal Security Services (at the time the FCS). He was forced out in the aftermath of the Chechen raid on Budennovsk. Most recently, Stepashin has been chief of the Administrative Department of the Government Staff, where he coordinated the activities of the power organs. He was also an instrumental member of the commission negotiating the Chechen settlement.

## **SECURITY SERVICES**

### **Prosecutor seeks supervision of wiretapping**

General Prosecutor Yuri Skuratov, acting on instructions from President Yel'tsin, recently announced a new effort to "step up supervision over the observance of legality in the sphere of telephone tapping in the country." (Novaya gazeta, 9-15 Jun 97) Skuratov is seeking new legislation to strengthen the role of the prosecutor's office in fulfilling its supervisory role in investigations.

As a reminder of the extent of wiretapping authority among Russia's security organs, the Law on Operational-Investigative Activity provides the following agencies with rights to conduct phone surveillance: MVD; FSB; tax police; Main Protection Directorate and Presidential Security Services [recently merged and renamed the Federal Protection Service (FSO)]; border guards; customs organs; and the Foreign Intelligence Service. Skuratov also listed the Main Intelligence Directorate of the General Staff. One more service comes to mind: FAPSI, although rumors persist as to its planned envelopment in the FSB.

# **Russian Federation: Foreign Relations**

By Chandler Rosenberger

### **Yel'tsin addresses G-7 in Denver, but will not attend NATO's July meeting**

At its late-June summit in Denver, the G-7 admitted Russia to the "Paris Club," a collection of industrialized, creditor nations. Russia's admittance will allow it more easily to collect and forgive international loans first extended by the former Soviet Union, particularly loans to African states. (Rossiyskiye vesti, 24 Jun 97).

Speaking at the opening of the G-7's Denver meeting on 20 June, Russian President Boris Yel'tsin described the political situation at home as "stable" and the economic prospects as "promising." He praised the Founding Act on NATO-Russia relations, signed last month in Paris, and called for a European Security Charter and speedy revision of the Treaty on Conventional Forces in Europe. (ITAR-TASS World Service, 21 Jun 97)

Yel'tsin turned down an invitation, however, to attend the July 9-10 meeting of NATO, to be held in Madrid, due to his continued opposition to NATO expansion. The sixteen member states of NATO are expected to approve the admittance of Central European states to the alliance by 1999. Deputy Prime Minister Valeriy Serov, whose specialty is Russia's relations with the Commonwealth of Independent States, will instead lead the delegation. (Interfax, 26 Jun 97)

French diplomat warns NATO-Russia accord will confuse decision-making  
The envisioned "permanent joint council" to be established between NATO and Russia will likely render decision-making within the alliance "unclear," a former representative of France to the Atlantic Council has predicted.

Writing in Paris' Les Echos, Francois Rose warned that the definition of "joint decision-making" included in the Founding Act on NATO-Russian relations is too vague. The Founding Act states that the permanent joint council will "be the main forum for consultation between NATO and Russia in the event of a crisis and in any other situation jeopardizing peace and security."

"There is every reason to suspect, therefore, that under these circumstances the NATO-Russia Council could become a kind of appeal body appended to the Atlantic Council," Rose wrote. (Les Echos, 26 Jun 97)

### **Nemtsov secures deals in Tokyo and Beijing, rebuffs EU representative**

First Vice Premier Boris Nemtsov, Russia's rising political star, secured trade deals with Japan and China on a Far East tour that he undertook after rebuffing the European Union.

In Japan, Nemtsov secured agreements on Russian debt and \$400 million in investment, for which he pledged to "personal support" for the first three private investors from Japan to pass the \$100-million mark. (Trud, 14 Jun 97) At least one Japanese analyst has concluded that Russia and Japan will henceforth be tied by personal relations rather than "rigid bureaucrat-led interaction." (Mainichi Shimbun, 21 Jun 97).

In Beijing a week later, Nemtsov attended a meeting of the Russian-Chinese Inter-governmental Commission, at which the two nations agreed to build a gas pipeline from Irkutsk to South Korea. The pipeline will cross Mongolia and China. (Interfax, 24 Jun 97).

Before leaving for the Far East, Nemtsov refused to meet European Commission Vice President Sir Leon Brittan, in protest of anti-dumping restrictions that the EU had placed on Russian raw materials. (Delovoy mir, 19 Jun 97)

### **Comment**

#### **Is Nemtsov Primakov's man?**

Whether analyzing the imminent return of Hong Kong to Chinese rule, or attempting to pick sides within the post-Communist states of Eastern Europe, the West has a bad habit of finding political virtue in politicians whose primary interest is economic reform. The enthusiasm with which Western capitals greeted

the promotion of Boris Nemtsov must now be tempered by concern. Nemtsov's recent actions may indicate that the young reformer is a vigorous proponent of economic reform because he seeks a nation strong enough to assert itself on the international stage.

Nemtsov's tour of the Far East was, at the very least, scripted by Foreign Minister Yevgeni Primakov, not known as a man endeared of Western foreign policy. Nemtsov's emphasis on bilateral deals with both China and Japan certainly fits Primakov's goal of a "strategic partnership" with both nations. Nemtsov's curt dismissal of Sir Leon Brittan over anti-dumping regulations also reveals a streak of petulance that would promote Primakov's larger agenda.

It is still too early to dismiss Nemtsov. One only hopes that it is not too late for Western nations to learn not to embrace every free-market economist in power.

## Russian Federation: Political Parties and Legislative Branch

By Michael Thurman

### **FEDERAL ASSEMBLY**

#### **Duma condemns Turkish genocide of Kurds**

Chairman of the State Duma Committee for Geopolitics Aleksei Mitrofanov said Turkey resorted to the use of power to establish control over the region through creating a pro-Turkish regime, which means gross interference into internal affairs of a neighbour state. The Geopolitics Committee believes the Turkish army should be immediately pulled out from the Kurdish autonomous district of Iraq. Mitrofanov urges the Council of Europe and other international organizations to put a stop to Turkish aggression in Northern Iraq.

It is comforting to see Russian concern for human rights abroad, but this pronouncement is more in keeping with what could be considered Russia's paranoid fear of Turkey, than with some newly emergent international altruism. Plus, it is unclear how annoying a member of NATO is going to benefit the Russia-NATO agreement. (ITAR-TASS, 19 May 97)

The Democratic Union of Russia (DUR) tells UK to keep Hong Kong  
Perhaps benefiting from personal experience, the DUR told Queen Elizabeth, among other British officials, that Communists cannot be trusted. "No international treaties with China justify the betrayal which is to happen in a month...." The central coordinating council of the Democratic Union is asking Great Britain to send its troops into Hong Kong, and to add to them, if necessary, NATO troops, and to hold a referendum on independence. (Informatsionnoye agentstvo ekho moskvy, 24 May 97)

### **New center-right political coalition emerges**

The coalition, tentatively called the Union of Progressive Russian Forces, is described as being "center-right." The agreements were signed on 6 June 1997. The coalition will include Our Home is Russia, chaired by Prime Minister Victor Chernomyrdin; Reforms - New Course, lead by Vladimir Shumeiko; and People's Homes, headed by Sergei Filatov.

This is yet another attempt to fashion, or refashion, the political party structure in the Russian Federation with an eye toward the construction of a two- or three-party system. But as long as parties are based on personalities rather than ideas, coalitions will inevitably be temporary. (Interfax in English, 1300 GMT, 27 May 1997; wnc.fedworld.gov)

## **REGIONAL ELECTIONS**

### **Magadan region electoral results**

Lawyer Vladimir Butkeev was elected to the Russian State Duma in Magadan region. The turnout for the State Duma and local elections was 43.79%. This makes the elections valid under regional law. Nikolai Karpenko has been reelected Magadan mayor (Interfax, 19 May 97).

## Russian Federation: Armed Forces

By CDR John Steele

### **Moscow bargains with missile sales as lever**

Moscow has agreed to forego the sale of S-300 PMU1 anti-aircraft missiles to Cyprus if the island is declared a "demilitarized zone" -- a sure non-starter from the Turkish perspective. (Monitor, 17 Jun 97)

### **Comment**

The Russians appear to be attempting to leverage arms sales into increasingly close Greek relations, which in turn drives a wedge in NATO. There is a lot going on here, not just relative to the Aegean, and arguably none of it good for regional stability or long-term peace.

### **Encroachments seen**

Russian border guards fired on Japanese fishermen near the Kuril Islands; two Japanese were injured. (RFE/RL Newslines, 26 Jun 97)

### **Comment**

Both countries claim the Kurils, and the Russians, defensive and preoccupied with loss of empire, are not disposed to accept any perceived encroachment -- this isn't the first time this has occurred and look for more of these types of incidents.

A similarly perceived encroachment resulted in the Russians protesting the use of a specially configured U.S. P-3 aircraft performing geographic survey work in Kazakhstan. The Russians claim the plane is spying on Russia and former Soviet test ranges in Kazakhstan. (Reuters, 26 Jun 97).

### **Duma cites need for more money to destroy weapons**

Russia says it needs \$5 billion to destroy chemical weapons. (Reuters, 20 Jun 97)

### **Comment**

Russia's Duma has failed to ratify the chemical weapons convention, citing the need for additional foreign funding and an extension on the destruction time limit. Russia is having no trouble funneling money into R&D and high priority strategic systems. The U.S. and Germany have already provided funds for chemical weapon destruction, but the Russians clearly think there may be more where that came from -- the technical term is extortion.

## **Russian Federation: Chechnya**

By Miriam Lansky

### **Aliev receives Maskhadov**

Maskhadov met a far warmer reception in Baku than in the Baltic capitals he visited a week earlier. The 1 July interview with the Azeri president was Maskhadov's first reception by a head of a foreign state. The two discussed "broad political questions" and issues pertaining to the transport of Azeri oil to Novorossiisk. (Reuters, 1 Jul 97)

### **Customs and banking deals may expedite agreement on oil**

Since January Chechnya sought a voice equal to Azerbaijan and Russia in the negotiations regarding the transport of oil across its territory, which Russia and

Azerbaijan have conceded during June. Chechnya has held out for favorable terms in the banking and customs agreements and Maskhadov has insisted that they precede the oil agreement. Chechnya's tactic has proven largely successful, because Moscow can ill afford to further delay the operation of the Novorossiisk line.

The banking agreement, which was concluded by the Russian Central Bank and the National Bank of Chechnya in May, was not approved by the Russian government until Chernomyrdin signed it on 9 July. The July text has not been made public but the head of Russia's Central Bank, Sergei Dubinin, described its basic provisions. The National Bank of Chechnya will open a correspondent account in the Russian Central Bank through which all the financial settlements between Chechnya and Moscow will be conducted. The Chechen bank will regulate banking in Chechnya and will not be part of the Central Bank of the Russian Federation. The ruble will remain Chechnya's currency. The Chechen banks will not be authorized to have foreign currency accounts in Moscow banks, but may set up such accounts in foreign countries. The agreement will be in effect one year. (Interfaks-Aif, 19-25 May 97)

The early oil from the Azeri fields is supposed to begin flowing along the Russian route by the end of this year. The failure to resolve peripheral issues, such as the status of Djokar-gala's Sheik Mansour airport, have held up the customs agreement and the oil agreement and pushed forward the date when repairs and operations of the pipeline can begin. Transneft, the Russian pipeline monopoly, estimates that it will need \$2 million and 20 days to repair the Chechen portion of the pipeline. Transneft, which is obligated by an agreement with Azerbaijan to ensure the safe passage of oil, also seeks a separate agreement with Chechnya's Southern Oil Company (Yunko). (Reuters, 1 Jul 97)

**Yunko president declares Chechnya environmental disaster zone**

Khozh-Akhmed Yarikhanov, Yunko president, has called on international environmental and relief organizations as well as oil companies that have experience in clean-up activities to aid Djokar-gala. Tens of thousands tons of oil products form underground lakes under the Chechen capital and surrounding regions. These shallow deposits, that in some cases rise to the surface, can catch fire or explode. The vapors may also cause mass poisoning. Many Chechens rely on the wells they dig for their own fuel needs and for cash income. But this dangerous practice has led to increasing numbers of deaths from poisoning, fire, and explosion. (Interfax, 14 Jun 97)

### **Poll shows most Russians think Chechnya will be independent**

Of 1,600 Russians polled on June 7 and 8 by the All-Russian Center for Public Opinion Studies (VTsIOM), 74% approve of the recent peace treaty with Chechnya, 12% disapprove and 14% are undecided. In response to another question, 52% thought that Chechnya would eventually become an independent state, 25% said it would remain in Russia and 23% did not know. (Interfax, 19 Jun 97)

## **Newly Independent States: CIS**

By Mark Jones

### **Ruble may be made reserve currency of CIS nations**

Noting that since detailed talks on the subject are already underway, representatives of the Bank of Russia proposed to make the ruble the reserve currency of the entire CIS. The same representatives claimed that proposals to this effect have been recently forwarded to most of the national banks of Commonwealth countries (ITAR-TASS, 9 Jun 97). First Deputy Prime Minister and Finance Minister Anatoli Chubais commented while in Denver that although Russia is not imposing the idea on anyone, the ruble is the leading non-national

currency in most CIS countries and will most likely evolve into the CIS reserve currency. (Interfax, 22 Jun 97)

### **Presidents sign accords**

The presidents of Azerbaijan and Kazakhstan held a summit where they signed 15 bilateral agreements. The more notable accords focused on development and cooperation in the areas of transportation, the oil and gas industries, sea navigation, and customs affairs. In a press conference after the signing, the presidents discussed the possibility of constructing a pipeline linking the two countries. The pipeline would be built under and stretch the entire length of the Caspian Sea, allowing Kazakhstan a non-Russian controlled route to export its oil and gas (ITAR-TASS, 10 Jun 97). Such cordial relations between the two countries point to the ever-deepening ties between the Central Asian and Caucasus states and may signal the rise of yet another power center within the CIS.

### **Evolution of the border troops**

The director of the Russian Federation Border Service, Andrei Nikolaev, has announced that his organization is evolving from a mere guard force to "a single master on the border." According to Nikolaev, the Border Troops have changed their name to the Border Guards Service and will be expanding their scope of duties. Soon, and with the blessing of President Yeltsin, a border guard will be "a single representative of the state who carries out all the necessary formalities for leaving or entering the state." These formalities will include matters of "international law, intelligence, counter-intelligence, military security itself, border checking procedures" and eventually customs and immigration controls. Nikolaev also noted that no border guards will be stationed on the Russian-Kazakh border, but that Russians will still stand on the CIS "outer borders" to show the "existence of our strategic interest on these [outer] borders" (Radio Moscow, 11 Jun 97).

In another interview, Nikolaev claimed that Armenia, Georgia, Kyrgyzstan, and Tajikistan "delegated to [the] Russian Federation's border troops the prerogative of guarding their state borders..." (Panorama, 6 Jun 97). We can see that senior Russian officials have not lost their ability to spin revisionist yarns.

What does this evolution mean? The implications are best summed up in an article in Rossiyskiye vesti (19 Jun 97). According to the paper, "while politicians look for ways of rapprochement between the states of the commonwealth, the border guards, as we can see, have engaged in earnest in this task." The Border Service, so expertly exploited in the past to maintain Russian dominance in the NIS, will now be in an even better position to continue doing so in the future. It may yet prove the instrument of choice to "reintegrate" the union.

#### **CIS committee meets in Minsk**

The CIS Joint Consultative Commission on Disarmament met for two days to discuss how "to adapt the [CFE treaty] to present day conditions." By the end of the meeting, the commission supported the establishment of a nuclear free zone in Central Europe and also favored banning the use antipersonnel mines. Details on what will be done with respect to CFE were not forthcoming. (ITAR-TASS, 17 and 19 Jun 97)

#### **The hazards of peacekeeping duty, part 2**

Another Russian has been killed while on peacekeeping duty. A Russian major was shot to death and a warrant officer was severely wounded in Dushanbe. This killing, on the heels of similar incidents in Georgia at the beginning of the month, brings to 24 the number of Russian "peacekeepers" killed in June. (Interfax, 17 Jun 97)

## **Newly Independent States: Central Asia**

By Monika Shepherd

## **TAJIKISTAN**

### **Operation to arrest President Rahmonov's attackers turns violent**

On 4 May 1997, a special rapid reaction force consisting of members of Tajikistan's Security Ministry, Interior Ministry, and the Prosecutor's Office launched an operation to arrest the members of a criminal gang who were accused of masterminding the 30 April assassination attempt on President Rahmonov. The gang contained at least 10 members, including Firdaws Dustboboev (he was arrested on 30 April in connection with the assassination attempt) and was led by Khurshed Abdurahafizovich Abdushukurov. Government investigators also charged the group with planning "terrorist attacks" on regional Leninobod authorities and justified the rapid reaction force's actions by stating that in order to prevent further attacks of this nature, the group had to be immediately neutralized. Most of the group's members were hiding in the village of Qistakuz (15 km southeast of Khojand, in Leninobod Oblast') when the rapid reaction force was sent in to arrest them. Government officials stated that the group's members were given a chance to surrender peacefully, but chose to use armed resistance instead. As many as five members of Abdushukurov's group may have been killed during the shoot-out (Radio Tajikistan Network, 5 May 97). Two of the men allegedly committed suicide, including Abdushukurov himself. (ITAR-TASS World Service, 4 May 97)

### **Comment**

It is interesting to note that Tajik government officials have made no statements about possible motives for the Abdushukurov group's alleged crimes. Immediately following the attempt on President Rahmonov's life, theories as to who was responsible for the attack and the reasons behind it were abundant. One of the theories most popular in Tajik government circles seemed to be that it was Abdumalik Abdullojonov's National Revival Bloc (which has a great deal of support in Khojand and which has been denied a voice in the transitional government) and/or disenfranchised Khojandi political factions which carried out

the attempt on the president's life in an effort to destabilize the current Tajik government and derail the inter-Tajik peace process. The mayor of Dushanbe, Mahmadsaid Ubaidulloev, openly accused Abdullojonov of perpetrating the attack and Deputy Prime Minister Abdurahmon Azimov stated that the goal of those responsible for the assassination attempt was to throw Tajikistan into a state of complete political instability (ITAR-TASS World Service, 1 May 97). Abdushukurov's group, however, has thus far been dismissed as a criminal gang or as a "group of robbers" (Radio Tajikistan Network, 5 May 97) and no reasons have been offered for why they might have been planning additional attacks on regional officials. Firdaws Dustboboev, one of the men who was arrested on 30 April in connection with the assassination attempt and an alleged member of Abdushukurov's group, was also one of the organizers of anti-government rallies held in Khojand in the spring of 1996. One possible conclusion then, is that whether Abdushukurov's group was responsible for the assassination attempt, the Tajik government wanted to halt its anti-government activities, as part of what seems to have become a general crackdown on political opposition in Leninobod Oblast', whether that opposition emanates from National Revival Bloc sympathizers or from UTO supporters.

### **Final round of inter-Tajik peace negotiations successfully concluded**

Despite a number of misgivings voiced by UTO leaders Said Abdullo Nuri and Haji Akbar Turajonzoda about the sincerity of the Tajik government's commitment to the peace process, the final round of the inter-Tajik peace negotiations came to a successful conclusion in Tehran on 28 May, with the signing of a protocol detailing the steps of the peace process. The protocol established that the National Reconciliation Commission would be led by a UTO representative and allocated 30% of the positions in the government's executive power structures, as well as 25% of the seats on the Central Election Commission to the UTO. The protocol provides for the legalization of all political opposition parties and movements, as long as their activities do not contradict the Tajik constitution or existing laws. The governments of Russia, Iran, Pakistan, Afghanistan,

Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, and Turkmenistan are to act as guarantors of the implementation of the measures set out by all of the peace agreements (Interfax, 28 May 97). The ambassadors of these countries are to form a contact group which will be stationed in Dushanbe in order to monitor the carrying out of the peace agreements and to provide any consultations or good offices which either the UTO or the Tajik government might require (Xinhua, 28 May 97). CIS peace keepers already stationed in Tajikistan are to be responsible for overseeing the return of UTO forces from Afghanistan to Tajikistan, although the UN mission is charged with overseeing the whole operation. As soon as this general agreement has been signed, the National Reconciliation Commission will be able to begin its tasks (Interfax, 28 May 97). [Although scheduled to be signed in mid-June, the general agreement was not signed until the end of the month in Moscow (ITAR-TASS, 27 Jun 97).]

It was also agreed that before the National Reconciliation Commission begins functioning, 460 UTO troops will be stationed in Dushanbe in order to guarantee the commission's security, and each side's representatives on the commission are permitted to have an additional 40 bodyguards for their personal security (Clandestine Voice of Free Tajikistan, 30 May 97).

### **Comment**

One of the UTO leaders' main reasons for doubting the strength of the Tajik government's commitment to the peace process is the recent arrest of a number of opposition supporters. It was the arrest of 10-15 opposition members which caused the April peace negotiations to break down, and since the assassination attempt on President Rahmonov, the arrests have continued, especially in Leninobod Oblast', where both UTO supporters and people affiliated with the National Revival Bloc seem to be targeted. In fact, the Tajik government seems to have seized upon the assassination attempt as an excuse to crack down on the disenfranchised Khojandi faction (which has been excluded from power since 1993) at least some of whose members now appear to support the National

Revival Bloc. Abdumalik Abdullojonov's younger brother was detained by the police on 23 May. On 25 May Said Abdullo Nuri sent a statement to Interfax from Tehran, in which he condemned the Tajik government's persecution of the UTO and other regional political opposition groups and called for an end to the arrests and reprisals, on the grounds that these actions constituted a threat to the peace process. He also stated that the UTO does not want its truce with the Tajik government to be used against any other political opposition movement (Interfax, 26 May 97). Nuri, at least, seems to have recognized that only a government which includes representatives of all the major opposition groups and regional power blocs can succeed in rebuilding Tajikistan.

### **Officials deny former Afghan president's presence in Tajikistan**

According to a source in the Afghan embassy, former President Burhanuddin Rabbani (he is allied with General Ahmad Shah Mas'ud) arrived in the southern Tajik town of Kulab either on 25 or 26 May, ostensibly to seek refuge from the Taleban, who it was feared would soon control all of northern Afghanistan (ITAR-TASS World Service, 26 May 97). Rabbani left Kulab for Iran on 26 May, according to an anonymous member of the Russian border guards stationed in Tajikistan (Informatsionnoye agentstvo ekho moskvy, 26 May 97). A spokesman for President Rahmonov vehemently denied that President Rabbani had ever been on Tajik territory, but a source close to President Rahmonov stated that the Tajik government had provided Rabbani with an air corridor to fly to Iran (Interfax, 27 May 97).

### **Six more of Sodirov's supporters arrested in Dushanbe**

The Tajik Presidential Guard arrested another six of Rezvon Sodirov's field commanders in Dushanbe on 11 May, according to Tajik military sources. Rezvon Sodirov himself was still suspected to be hiding in a mountain gorge with a few of his supporters, and authorities continued to look for members of his militia group in Dushanbe (ITAR-TASS)

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