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Russian Federation: Executive Branch

By Susan Cavan

PRESIDENCY

Counterweight to elected governors found in representatives

Following just a few months of attempting to coordinate policy with Russia's recently elected local governors, President Yel'tsin has decided to strengthen the position of his representatives to the regions, apparently increasing their role in economic issues. Without the details from the decree, it is difficult to determine the exact nature of the new powers, however Presidential Council member Leonid Smirnyagin has commented that the edict envisions the creation of "collegiums of the top officials of all the territories." The Presidential Representatives will chair these collegiums. (Obshaya gazeta, 10 Jul 97)

Yarov "vacationing" with Yel'tsin

First Deputy Head of the Presidential Administration Yuri Yarov accompanied Yel'tsin on his vacation to Karelia and continues to supervise the president's schedule and appointments. (Interfax, 7 Jul 97) Yarov also worked closely with Yel'tsin throughout his illness and convalescence from heart surgery and is performing a function similar to the role Viktor Ilyushin played in his years of presidential service. In the polarized world of Kremlin politics, Yarov has been identified as a "Chernomyrdin man," however his continued presence at the side of the president suggests he has found accommodation with Chubais as well.

GOVERNMENT

Daggers drawn as infighting continues

If all the theories of shifting alliances and tit-for-tat are true, July has seen a marked increase in elite infighting as the struggle for Kremlin influence and
support returns to a familiar theme of corruption charges. There appear to be several fault lines of contention among current and former government members. One involves a reported split between Anatoli Chubais and Uneximbank President and former Finance Minister Vladimir Potanin. Just as Chubais was preparing to leave for vacation, Izvestiya published a report of a suspicious, interest-free loan provided by Aleksandr Smolensky's Stolichnii Bank to Chubais' Center for the Defense of Private Property. Potanin owns a substantial interest in Izvestiya and had recently skirmished with its editorial office in an attempt to exert greater control. (Izvestiya, 1 Jul 97)

Within days, the head of the Central Bank, Sergei Dubinin, announced that former Finance Ministry employees were involved in questionable transactions that cost the budget $200 million. (ITAR-TASS, 14 Jul 97) Specifically mentioned in the accusations and investigation were former First Deputy Finance Minister Andrei Vavilov and Potanin. Dubinin eventually backed down on his allegations, withdrawing the charge of corruption and claiming only that Vavilov "brought certain harm to the budget." (Interfax, 15 Jul 97) It will be interesting to track the tenor of forthcoming Izvestiya articles on Chubais for signs of a continuing feud.

Chernomyrdin also chose the opportunity of Chubais' absence to criticize the work of the Finance Ministry, currently overseen by Chubais. (ITAR-TASS, 8 Jul 97) The real struggle, however, seems to be in attempts to remove Internal Affairs Minister Anatoli Kulikov. The persistent rumors of a merger of FAPSI into the FSB may be targeted at forming a strong enough power base to challenge Kulikov's authority. (Kuranty, 2 Jul 97)

The recent intensification of the Chubais-Kulikov conflict apparently has its foundation in Kulikov's June criticism of the State Committee for Property (GKI), previously overseen by Chubais. (Kuranty, 2 Jul 97, Pravda rossi, 9 Jul 97) The Pravda report contains an account of a heated dispute between Chubais and Kulikov over GKI, during which Chubais allegedly threatened to have Kulikov
arrested through the Justice Ministry. It may well be unsupportable, but one cannot help imagining a direct line from Chubais' threat to the leak of an MVD-held video compromising the justice minister to the rapid appointment of a likely Kulikov sympathizer, Sergei Stepashin. The countercharges of corruption and incompetence are likely to continue within the government throughout the summer as distinct "clans" and economic interests vie for influence. Chubais and his coalition of bankers have been ascendant for over a year, and with signs of the coalition disintegrating, it would be natural for challengers to stoke the fires of division.

SECURITY SERVICES
Kovalev claims authorship of restructuring plans
In an interview with Moskovsky komsomolets (4 Jul 97), Federal Security Services (FSB) Chief Nikolai Kovalev contradicted previous reports that he had been taken by surprise by the presidential decree which outlines a reorganization of the service. "This is not true," said Kovalev, "I personally drew up the edict."

Russian Federation: Foreign Relations
By Chandler Rosenberger

Russians and Azeris to pump oil along Baku-Grozny-Novorossiisk route
Political leaders of Russia and Azerbaijan agreed on 4 July to begin pumping Caspian Sea oil along a route from the Azeri port of Baku to the Chechen capital Grozny, then on to Novorossiisk, a Russian port on the Black Sea.

The trilateral agreement was to be signed by commercial representatives of the three governments, but was supported by their politicians. Delivery of oil would require the rebuilding of a section of the pipeline that runs through Chechnya, but could begin within a month of signing a trilateral contract, according to Russian
First Deputy Prime Minister Boris Nemtsov, Moscow's representative at the talks. (Interfax, 1543 GMT, 4 Jul 97)

Despite the agreement, relations among the three parties remain thorny. Baku objects to Russian plans to continue operating an early missile warning system in the Azeri town of Gabal, and claims Russia harbors a number of former Azeri political leaders, such as former Azeri president Ayaz Mutalibov, accused of undisclosed crimes. (Interfax, 1541 GMT, 4 Jul 97). And Chechen president Aslan Maskhadov appears only to have given the agreement his blessing after receiving assurances from Azeri leaders that Baku would help Chechnya rebuild oil refineries in Grozny, a gesture of cooperation that makes Moscow nervous. (Zerkalo, 5 Jul 97)

Moscow appears to have acquiesced in the face of the threat that the Azeris would seek a route that bypassed Russian soil. Azeri president Heidar Aliev kept up the pressure as negotiations appeared to falter a week later, during a visit of Nemtsov to Baku. "I'll say frankly," Aliev warned Nemtsov, "that if you do not open this route up for us, we will have the opportunity to move oil along two other routes: one through Georgia to the port of Supsa, the other to the port of Ceyhan through Turkey." (Interfax, 1736 GMT 11 Jul 97)

**Estonia rejects offer of "security guarantees" extended by Russia**

Estonian Prime Minister Mart Siimann turned down Moscow's offer of security guarantees to Tallinn in return for Estonia's refusal to join NATO.

"Estonia sees her security guarantees only in her integration into European institutions, including NATO," Siimann stated. "We know that NATO's door is open for us but now I do not want to debate the question of when we may come in though this door. However, we firmly believe that our security guarantees are linked with our joining NATO," he added. (Segodnya, 17 Jul 97). Russian Foreign
Minister Yevgeni Primakov had extended the offer on 13 July, shortly before meeting U.S. Secretary of State Madeleine Albright in St. Petersburg.

**Primakov slams chase of Bosnian Serbs, threatens review at NATO council**

Shortly after British attempts to capture alleged Bosnian Serb war criminals, Primakov said Russia disapproves of the action. The steps go beyond the peacekeepers' mandate and are not productive, he said. Nor was Russia consulted in advance. "I would very much like it if such actions did not recur," he said. The situation in Bosnia should be a subject of discussion at the very first session of the Russia-NATO permanent council. (Interfax, 1335 GMT, 14 Jul 97).

**NATO offers membership to East Europeans; Russia sees problems ahead**

At a meeting in Madrid on 9-10 July, leaders of NATO formerly invited the Czech Republic, Hungary and Poland to join the alliance. The alliance also signed a friendship treaty with Ukraine, although the alliance did not offer Kiev the extensive mechanisms for consultation that were granted to Moscow a month earlier.

Russian newspapers continue to condemn the expansion. The expansion, wrote Trud, "marks the start of the process of NATO's advance toward our borders. And let us not forget that, for all its peace-loving statements, NATO remains primarily a military bloc." (Trud, 10 Jul 97)

**New weapons sales possible to Indonesia, Pakistan**

Indonesian Minister of State for Research and Technology Burhanuddin Yusuf Habibie, in Moscow for the first week of July, met with ministers of foreign economic relations and representatives of Rosvooruzhenie, the Russian arms merchant, in the hope of securing new aircraft. Russian sources said Jakarta had planned to purchase the American-built F-16 but, worried about pressure on Congress from human rights groups, had decided to investigate Russian-made
weapons, including the multi-purpose fighter bombers Su-30. (ITAR-TASS, 0806 GMT, 2 Jul 97)

Meanwhile Russian ministers, reversing a long-standing ban, offered to sell tanks to Pakistan. Pakistani Foreign Minister Gohar Ayub Khan, in Moscow on 10 July, said Islamabad may take up Russia's offer, and would welcome Russian mediation of the dispute with India over Kashmir. Russia had previously refused to sell weapons to Pakistan, for fear that such sales would jeopardize contracts for shipments to India. (Interfax, 1736 GMT, 10 Jul 97)

Comment

Cat-and-Mouse with the Baltics

At first glance, Moscow's relations with the Baltic states, particularly with Estonia, seem schizophrenic. On the one hand, the Russian foreign ministry is capable of holding calm, sober meetings with Baltic leaders, such as the talks conducted between Deputy Foreign Minister Aleksandr Avdeev and Estonian Foreign Minister Toomas Hendrik Ilves on July 3, which the latter felt had yielded progress on disagreements over the border. (Radio Tallinn Network, 1600 GMT, 3 Jul 97).

On the other, there are the ominous rumblings of Russian Foreign Minister Yevgeni Primakov, who, in discussions with his British counterpart, maintained that relations with Estonia and Latvia are hampered by the republics' "policy of discrimination" against their Russian-speaking populations. (Interfax, 1335 GMT, 14 Jul 97).

Into this odd mix of signals comes Primakov's recent pledge to provide the Baltic states with "security guarantees" in lieu of their acquiring full NATO membership. Primakov veiled the suggestion in the garb of flexibility, saying that such a system could be maintained either by Russia alone or by guarantees given jointly
by Russia and Western states. "We are not against using various forms," Primakov said. (ITAR-TASS World Service, 0840 GMT, 13 Jul 97).

Such "flexibility" would be instrumental in maintaining Russian influence over the vulnerable states. Since outright military action would surely prompt Western condemnation, Russia would have to move softly, bemoaning ill-defined "discrimination" against the Russian populations while inserting "peacekeepers" and "security forces" as part of an international force. Primakov's condemnation of the manhunt for Bosnian Serb war criminals tells one exactly how effectual he would like to see such international operations be. The West ought not to allow Moscow's apparent inconsistencies toward the Baltics to jell into an all-too-consistent pattern of intimidation.

Russian Federation: Political Parties, Legislative Branch, and Media
By Michael Thurman

POLITICAL PARTIES
Communist wins in Rostov by-election
Nikolai Kolomeitsev, communist, has, by early accounts, won a State Duma seat in the southern Rostov region, an official in the local election commission told Interfax. Kolomeitsev won 39.76% of the votes cast, he said. Turnout in the 1 June vote was 31.5%, while 25% makes the elections valid. Kolomeitsev fills the vacated seat of Sergei Shakhrai, who is currently the presidential envoy to the Constitutional Court. (Interfax, 1122 GMT, 2 Jun 97)

Progressive Forces Union established
The leaders of Russia Is Our Home, Reforms-New Policy, and the All-Russia Union of People's Homes signed an agreement on the creation of a Union of
Progressive Forces (SPS). The creation of the SPS is yet another attempt to unify those on the center-right of the political spectrum in opposition to the left. This is not the first, nor certainly the last, attempt to form some semblance of a two-, or at most a three-party system. Predictable failure lies not only in the personality cults at the center of each party, but also of an electoral system which puts much stress on a politician's regional or local loyalties. State-wide parties would seem to be difficult to hold together. (Rossiyskaya gazeta, Dom i otechestvo supplement, 31 May-6 Jun 97)

**FEDERAL ASSEMBLY**

**Duma completes work on a new law on terrorism**

The law defines a terrorist as someone who commits politically motivated violence--although religious and national motives will also be considered. The new law also allows for negotiations with terrorists, however, any negotiated settlement may not include the giving of weapons, drugs, money, airplanes, or helicopters to terrorists. The main point of the law is the creation of a federal commission capable of combating terrorism. Membership in such a commission would include the MVD (Ministry of Internal Affairs), the FSB (Federal Security Service), the SVR (Foreign Intelligence Service), Federal Protection Service, the MO (Ministry of Defense), and the FPS (Federal Border Service). Its director would be one of the deputy prime ministers. Its first deputy would be the head. Possible governmental abuse of such a commission is clearly possible. By declaring a group or person a terrorist, the normal laws of the state are superseded. Implications for the rule of law are significant (Obshchaya gazeta, 29 May-4 Jun 97).

**Federation Council approves Supreme Court candidates**

Pursuant to Article 83 of the constitution, candidates Sergei Vorozhtsov, deputy chairman of the Kirov regional court; Vladimir Zaitsev, a judge of the Sverdlovsk regional court; Gennadi Ivanov, a judge of the Rostov regional court; and
Vladimir Koval, a judge of the Tomsk regional court were approved by the council (ITAR-TASS, 1702 GMT, 9 Jun 97; FBIS-SOV-97-160).

MEDIA

TV Tsentr starts broadcasting
The new federal television company "TV Tsentr" began broadcasting 9 June on the third frequency channel. The cable and satellite television broadcasting consortium was created in early 1997 at the initiative of the Moscow government and under the patronage of Moscow Mayor Yuri Luzhkov. The main point of "TV Tsentr's" debut is the creation of a television channel worthy of Moscow. It is no secret that the present popularity ratings and content of third channel programs have not suited the capital's authorities for a long while. The channel will also function as a mouthpiece for Mayor Luzhkov's national political ambitions, bypassing other state-run broadcasts whose loyalties over the years have clearly been with President Yel'tsin. The consortium is a joint-stock company whose controlling block of shares belongs to the Moscow city government (Rossiyanskaya gazeta, 10 Jun 97)

Russian Federation: Armed Forces
By CDR John G. Steele and Susan Cavan

NATO-Russia Joint Council meets
The first meeting of the NATO-Russia Joint Council was held, and the results exacerbated rather than settled the controversy over the extent to which Russia has gained a "veto" over alliance actions. Russia did gain a concession on the chairmanship of the council--it will now rotate among the three representatives at the head of the table: Russia, the secretary-general and an alliance member (also rotating). However, council members did not concede to Russia's demand that the secretary-general's chair should be eliminated, which would have left only Russia and an alliance member in the chair. (RFE/RL Newsline, 21 July 97).
Comment
The work of the Joint Council will be dominated by the Russians to the extent that the alliance allows it to be so dominated. Russian intent is clear, purposeful and relentless--exert pressure until something is conceded. Alliance solidarity and backbone will be under continuous strain, and concessions will only precipitate additional demands. In this contest of will, the alliance may be facing its toughest test yet.

Military reform calls for substantial troop reduction
Boris Yel'tsin has signed a landmark decree on military reform. In short, it calls for a reduction in force strength by 500,000 to 1.2 million. The ground troops command is to be abolished; the strategic missile forces, the space defense force, and anti-aircraft missile units are to be combined; and the air defense forces are to be merged with the air force. Cuts in the defense ministry's central apparatus budget also are planned. (RFE/RL Newsline, 17 Jul 97).

Comment
These moves have been roundly criticized by a number of ex-military figures, including Lebed, Rodionov, and Rokhlin. Some of the initiatives make some sense, some are curious. It is by no means the comprehensive reform blueprint long promised, and is not explicitly coordinated with the new Defense Minister Igor Sergeev's reform plan, supposedly due later this month. The problem with presidential decrees in Russia is that there is no consistent record of compliance, particularly where entrenched bureaucracies are concerned.

Rokhlin's "appeal" attracts disparate groups
Retired General Lev Rokhlin, head of the State Duma's Committee on Defense, sent a much-publicized appeal to President Yel'tsin in late June on the condition of the armed forces and the need for urgent military reform. He also distributed the appeal among Duma deputies. He wrote to the president, he claims, because
the new Defense Minister Sergeev refused to address the Duma on the military
reform plans, and because the presidential staff was blocking attempts by
Federal Assembly leaders to contact the president on this issue. (Ekho moskvy,
28 Jun 97)

Rokhlin has previously expressed concerns about the state of the armed forces
in the aftermath of the war in Chechnya, however on this occasion the appeal
sounds more alarmist and the implications more resounding. As Rokhlin states,
he felt he needed to address "the real danger of the army's disintegration and the
absence of any rational explanation or justification for what is happening." (Ekho
moskvy, 28 Jun 97) The timing of his appeal may also be linked to the very noisy
dismissal of his friend, Igor Rodionov, from the post of defense minister in May.

The aftereffects of Rokhlin's appeal are far from certain. His position as number
three man in Our Home is Russia (NDR) prompted Prime Minister Chernomyrdin
to denounce the appeal at a party gathering in July: "It is intolerable to call
especially for disobedience to the leader of the state and to engage in direct
political campaigning in the troops. ... Rokhlin's position was not coordinated with
anyone. It contradicts our movement's program and the program of military
reform which the president and government are implementing." (Rossiyskaya
gazeta, 5-11 Jul 97)

Despite threats to remove him from the party, the NDR membership elected not
to oust him. (ITAR-TASS, 3 Jul 97) This has led to some speculation that despite
the public comments, Rokhlin's appeal had the tacit support of some NDR
government members and was part of a campaign to discredit the current
political and military leadership. (Moskovsky komsomolets, 7 Jul 97) Rokhlin,
however, maintains that he received no support "either from the executive
authority or, unfortunately, from the faction." (Ekho moskvy, 28 Jun 97)
Rokhlin has been gathering support for his cause and has formed a public "All-Russia Movement for the Defense of the Army, Defense Industry, and Military Sciences." The movement has the backing and participation of several well-known Russian leaders including the former Defense Minister Igor Rodionov; Arkadi Volsky and his Union of Industrialists and Entrepreneurs; Stanislav Terekhov and his radical Union of Officers; and the Russian Union of Afghanistan veterans. In all approximately twenty public and political organizations have expressed their support for the new movement. (ITAR-TASS, 9 Jul 97) Following an initial meeting of supporters on 9 July, the movement's organizing committee issued an address to the president and prime minister, calling on them "to take urgent measures for halting collapse of the armed forces, military sciences and the defense industry." (Interfax, 9 Jul 97)

Rokhlin is planning a constituent assembly for September, at which time he hopes to see the movement transformed into a powerful Duma faction. He claims to have support for this faction from among the membership of the Communist Party, the Liberal Democrats, and the Congress of Russian Communities. (ITAR-TASS, 9 Jul 97)

Newly Independent States: Caucasus

By Miriam Lanskoy

New wrangles over US policy towards Azerbaijan loom

US policy towards Azerbaijan has long been held captive by the Armenian lobby. Recently Congressman Pallone put forth two resolutions: One claims a larger US role in resolving the Karabakh dispute; the other advises the president to promote the Armenian route for the oil pipeline to Turkey. (Moscow News, 10 Jul 97) The administration's line was made clear by the US Ambassador to Azerbaijan, Richard Kauzlarih, who told the media that "Pallone's proposals are only proposals, and they cannot direct the actions of the US Government."
Moreover, "Peace must be established in the region before the oil pipeline can be laid across Armenia." (Turan, 2 Jul 97) While the Congress has repeatedly penalized Azerbaijan on an unprecedented level, the administration has sought to ingratiate itself with the Azeri leadership to pave the way for US oil interests. When Aliev visits Washington DC in early August these lines of division are likely to become more manifest. (For the details on Amendment 907 to the Freedom Support Act and on Armenian efforts to secure the pipeline route ahead of any Karabakh resolution, see previous editorial digests.)

The non-events of Aliev's Moscow visit

On 3 July President Heidar Aliev visited Moscow for the first time as president of Azerbaijan. While in Moscow he signed a friendship and cooperation treaty which addresses none of the substantial tensions that have been plaguing relations between the two states. (For a text of the treaty see TASS, 3 Jul 97) The Russian/Azeri border remains closed, the status of the Caspian Sea remains contested, the future of the Russian lease of the Gabalin radar station remains unclear. Of the two oil contracts reached during the talks one was almost immediately challenged by Turkmenistan, which claims legal ownership of the field while Rosneft, the Russian company involved, has signaled that it may pull out of the deal. (Azadlyg, 10 Jul 97)

The tripartite oil transport agreement

The tripartite agreement on oil transit signed on 11 July by First Deputy Prime Minister Boris Nemtsov for Russia, SOCAR president Natik Aliev for Azerbaijan, and Yunko head Khozh-Akhmed Yarikhanov for Chechnya qualifies as the second non-event of the month. A restatement of two previous Russian-Azeri agreements, its main function was to give Chechnya a seat at the table that it demanded. However the Chechens also got less than they wanted: Their Azeri and Russian partners regarded the deal as entirely technical in nature (and decided in principle to carry the early oil to Novorossiisk as early as 1995) and hence regarded it as a commercial transaction rather than the international treaty
that Chechnya sought. As in the friendship and cooperation treaty the most pertinent points were omitted entirely from the discussion. For instance, Chechnya's portion of the tariff fees remains a point of contention.

From the point of view of regional politics, the customs treaty that preceeded the oil transport treaty is of greater significance. One of its provisions provides for joint Russian-Chechen control of the Georgian-Chechen border. (Monitor, 14 Jul 97) Aside from prompting the resignation of Shamil Basaev from the Chechen government, the provision marks the first substantial Chechen capitulation to Moscow and a betrayal of Georgia, perhaps Chechnya's most crucial ally.

**Minsk Group mediator countries use Denver as forum**
During the G-8 summit in Denver, Boris Yeltsin, Bill Clinton, and Jacques Chirac issued a joint statement expressing their "profound concern" over the absence of resolution in the Nagorno-Karabakh dispute. The three countries have appointed mediators who in May and June approached Yerevan, Stepanakert and Baku with a "comprehensive settlement." The Denver statement reiterates the support for the joint effort at the highest level of political leadership. (Interfax, 21 Jun 97)

According to the mediators' plan, Armenia's military would pull out of non-Karabakh Azeri land that they have been occupying. They would also pull out of Shusha. At that point OSCE peacekeepers, made up in large part of Russian and US personnel, would preside over the return of refugees to the region. Karabakh would be granted a wide degree of autonomy but would remain part of Azerbaijan. (Moscow News, 10 Jul 97) Whatever the merits of this scheme, it has not been endorsed by any of the parties to the conflict.

**Aliev's "campaign" begins**
On the last day of his Moscow visit, Aliev announced that he would run for a second term in the presidential elections next year. Promotion of Aliev's own personality cult and some unsavory actions against his opponents have already
emerged as the tactics most characteristic of his campaign. On 27 June the Azeri parliament, packed with Aliev supporters, voted to proclaim 15 June, the day that Aliev came to power in 1993, a state holiday. The anniversary of Aliev's coup against the popularly elected government of Abulfaz Elchibey will now be referred to as "the Day of the Liberation of the Azerbaijani people." (Panorama, 28 Jun 97) The former president, Elchibey, has been living in Nakhichevan for the last four years, during which time his presidential term has expired.

Recently Elchibey expressed his wish to return to Baku and resume a leadership role in the Azerbaijan People's Front (APF), the political party he headed which remains a leading opposition party to Aliev. Elchibey told an Azeri newspaper that he has not experienced any intimidation or official harassment since he came forward with his desire to return. (Zerkalo, 31 May 97) Nevertheless, he sought a parliamentary resolution granting him protection from persecution as a condition of his return to Baku. The parliament refused to consider this proposal, stating that any citizen of Azerbaijan can reside where he wishes and the case of the former president does not warrant any special protection. (BBC, 19 Jun 97)

A more blatant effort to silence the opposition came when the Communist Party congress was forcibly dispersed on 30 June. According to Azeri press accounts the congress consisted of a few hundred deputies and a few dozen foreign guests. The speeches were moderate and no calls for revolutionary violence or the overthrow of the government were delivered. As the leader of the Liberal Party, Zakir Mamedov, told the press, only those parties that support the current regime are allowed to participate in the political process "those who speak the truth are being squeezed in every possible way ..." (Turan, 30 Jun 97)

**Trial of accused Russian spy opens**
Salman Ibragimov, a Georgian citizen, is accused of spying for the Russian General Staff's Main Intelligence Department in Tbilisi and is standing trial in Azerbaijan's Supreme Court. If found guilty he faces a prison term of 7-15 years
or the death penalty. Three others are accused of lesser charges; one of them, Akhad Mamedov, is an aide to Isa Gambar, the leader of the Musavat party. The Musavat party and the APF constitute the most substantial opposition parties.

(Turan, 8 Jul 97)

Newly Independent States: Central Asia

By Monika Shepherd

TAJIKISTAN

Colonel Khudoiberdiev opposed to terms of peace agreement

On 15 June, government troops at two checkpoints to the south of Dushanbe were disarmed and supplanted by forces loyal to Colonel Mahmud Khudoiberdiev, a former member of the Popular Front militia and currently deputy commander of the Presidential Guard in Qurghan Teppa (Clandestine Voice of Free Tajikistan, 0350 GMT, 18 Jun 97; FBIS-UMA-97-169, 18 Jun 97). Khudoiberdiev effectively controls all of Khatlon oblast' in southern Tajikistan. One of the checkpoints is located 30 km southeast of Dushanbe, and gives Khudoiberdiev's men control of the Fakhrobod mountain pass (one of the main access points to Dushanbe); the second checkpoint is located approximately 70 km south of Dushanbe, close to the village of Dahanakiyik (Interfax, 1701 GMT, 17 Jun 97; FBIS-SOV-97-168, 17 Jun 97). One Tajik Defense Ministry soldier was killed during the takeover of the Fakhrobod checkpoint and two army officers were kidnapped and are being held at Khudoiberdiev's headquarters in Qurghan Teppa, 100 km south of Dushanbe (Interfax, 1613 GMT, 18 Jun 97; FBIS-SOV-97-169, 18 Jun 97). Col. Khudoiberdiev stated that his forces were compelled to take over these two checkpoints in order to protect the local population from further abuses by government soldiers. He claimed that the checkpoints were set up illegally and that local residents and travelers were tortured there (Clandestine Voice of Free Tajikistan, 0630 GMT, 20 Jun 97; FBIS-SOV-97-171, 20 Jun 97).
Apparently, Col. Khudoiberdiev is dissatisfied with some of the terms of the inter-Tajik peace agreement, particularly with the section of the agreement which calls for the return to Tajikistan of those United Tajik Opposition (UTO) troops remaining in Afghanistan. He and his supporters announced that they would not permit the 460 UTO troops slated to be stationed in Dushanbe for the duration of the National Reconciliation Commission's work to enter the capital. Col. Khudoiberdiev told journalists that he is very disappointed in President Rahmonov’s government for allowing Prof. Said Abdullo Nuri (the leader of the UTO) to come to Dushanbe to lead the National Reconciliation Commission and that he expected his own relationship with the Tajik government to deteriorate even further as a result (Interfax, 1701 GMT, 17 Jun 97; FBIS-SOV-97-168, 17 Jun 97). Col. Khudoiberdiev has also demanded that President Rahmonov redivide Khatlon Oblast' into its two previous administrative units, the oblasts of Kulab and Qurghan Teppa, and that he dismiss several officials currently in the local Khatlon administration and replace them with appointees whom Khudoiberdiev favors. A protest meeting which Khudoiberdiev called in Qurghan Teppa to support his demands developed into a week-long rally (Clandestine Voice of Free Tajikistan, 0350 GMT, 18 Jun 97; FBIS-SOV-97-169, 18 Jun 97).

A government delegation led by Abdulmajid Dostiev, deputy chairman of Tajikistan's Supreme Assembly, traveled to Qurghan Teppa to hold negotiations with Khudoiberdiev, but failed to make any headway toward resolving the conflict (Clandestine Voice of Free Tajikistan, 0350 GMT, 18 Jun 97; FBIS-UMA-97-169, 18 Jun 97). President Rahmonov had invited Col. Khudoiberdiev to Dushanbe in order to discuss the settlement of his demands; however, Khudoiberdiev told Deputy Chairman Dostiev that he will not go to Dushanbe because he believes that the invitation is simply a ruse and that he would be imprisoned as soon as he reached the capital (Clandestine Voice of Free Tajikistan, 0530 GMT, 21 Jun 97; FBIS-SOV-97-172, 21 Jun 97). An anonymous Interfax source has reported that President Rahmonov’s government issued an unofficial request to the CIS peacekeeping forces stationed in Tajikistan to aid in protecting Dushanbe from
an invasion by Col. Khudoiberdiev's forces, should the need arise. A unit of the 201st Motorized Rifle Division is deployed in Qurghan Teppa, but thus far has only expressed its readiness to negotiate with Khudoiberdiev (Interfax, 1613 GMT, 18 Jun 97; FBIS-SOV-97-169, 18 Jun 97).

On 21 June, Col. Khudoiberdiev's forces attacked the Lenin District (located 17 km west of Dushanbe) and killed eight Internal Affairs Ministry officials. The reasons for this attack were unknown, but there are rumors that Khudoiberdiev is planning to take control of both Dushanbe and Kofarnihon district, where the UTO has its headquarters (Clandestine Voice of Free Tajikistan, 0530 GMT, 21 Jun 97; FBIS-SOV-97-172, 21 Jun 97).

Comment
This is Col. Mahmud Khudoiberdiev's third and boldest mutiny against the Tajik government. His forces are purported to be the strongest and best trained in the country, and he seems to command a great deal of respect and loyalty among his men, due to his various military successes. President Rahmonov has been forced to give in to many of Khudoiberdiev's previous demands, and may find himself compelled to meet at least a few of the colonel's current wishes, unless the Russian government and/or the commander of the CIS peacekeeping forces in Tajikistan become willing to bring some pressure to bear on Khudoiberdiev. However, since up until now Khudoiberdiev has been given virtually carte blanche to rule his own fiefdom (Khatlon Oblast') as he sees fit--he has managed to force a few local administrators out of office--it seems unlikely that either the Russian government or the CIS peacekeepers will involve themselves in the current conflict, even though it presents a very serious threat to the inter-Tajik peace process. In fact, Col. Khudoiberdiev's actions may suit the Russian government very well, because as long as he is able to challenge and even defy President Rahmonov's authority, Tajikistan will remain politically unstable and thus forced to depend on Moscow to guarantee its continued survival as a republic. This would allow the Russian government to maintain at least some
leverage in the affairs of the Central Asian republics, as well as providing it with ready access to the Afghan border. Khudoiberdiev's forces may even be aiding the Russian government in its efforts to funnel arms to General Ahmad Shah Mas'ud in Afghanistan.

There are also unconfirmed reports that Uzbekistan is supporting Col. Khudoiberdiev and that one of his cohorts, the former mayor of Tursunzode, Ibodullo Boimatov, has taken refuge in Uzbekistan (Le Monde Diplomatique, July 97). In fact, there are rumors that Khudoiberdiev himself might be ethnically Uzbek. This is also not at all an impossible scenario. The Uzbek government has also been giving aid to the anti-Taleban forces (most notably to General Dostum), and the good offices of someone like Khudoiberdiev, who is in control of much of the territory along the Tajik-Afghan border, could be very useful to Uzbekistan. Furthermore, it is doubtful that the Uzbek government has given up its intentions of regaining its former influence in the Tajik government, and if the Khujandi faction does not succeed in attaining a place in the new government, then perhaps Col. Khudoiberdiev will.

Newly Independent States: Baltic States
By Kate Martin

Denmark lends more than a hand
Denmark has pledged to increase its financial support for the Baltic states' preparations to join the European Union (ETA, 5 Jun 97). The Scandinavian country has taken the three states under her wing in many of their attempts to participate in Western ventures. Denmark also reportedly has worked behind the scenes to ensure a sufficient feeling of security for the region once it became clear that NATO admission for the three Baltic states was unlikely in the first round of enlargement. A plan developed by the Danes encompasses
coordination of economic aid as well as military cooperation (Berlinske Tidende, 3 Apr 97).

**Military cooperation provokes Russian warning**
The Baltic states peacekeeping battalion (BALTBAT) is ready for its first mission, and is awaiting a UN-determined destination (ETA, 9 Jun 97). The battalion, which combines infantry units from all three states, is the most advanced portion of a three-pronged military cooperation venture between the countries, which also have organized a joint mine squadron (BALTRON) and a combined air control system (BALTNET).

While these efforts were not enough to ensure a hearty NATO welcome, they did provoke a warning in the Russian media. Military cooperation between the three countries as a whole, and particularly BALTNET, were cited in Nezavisimoye voyennoye obozreniye (29 Mar 97) among the examples of "anti-Russian policy in the Baltic region...headed up by the United States of America." NATO exercises in the Baltic Sea, bilateral ties between the Baltic states and the US, and participation in the Partnership for Peace program rounded out the list of examples.

**ESTONIA**

**Ethnic relations come under scrutiny**
In April Max van der Stoel, the OSCE chief commissioner for ethnic minorities, cited a significant improvement in the situation of ethnic minorities in Estonia since 1993. He did, however, note room for further improvements, with the possible simplification of language tests and the granting of citizenship to all children born in Estonia, regardless of their parents' citizenship (ETA, 9 Apr 97)

The new government of Mart Siimann appears to be taking van der Stoel's concerns seriously. In May the government reinstituted the post of Ethnic
Relations Minister (Radio Tallinn Network, 14 May 97), a position which had been abolished by Mart Laar's government a few years previously.

According to January 1997 statistics, Estonia has just under 1.5 million persons: 64 percent (957,000) are Estonian citizens; 15 percent (100,000) are citizens of another country, primarily Russia; while 22 percent (335,000) hold no citizenship in any country but do possess residence permits in Estonia (Svenska Dagbladet, 4 Apr 97). The director-general of the Citizenship and Immigration Board, Andres Kollist, estimated the number of illegal aliens in Estonia to be 20,000-30,000 (ETA, 12 May 97).

Courting of Russian favor only goes so far
A Chechen parliamentary delegation was refused entry by the Estonian government because its members lacked acceptable travel documents. According to Prime Minister Mart Siimann, Estonia refused to issue special permits allowing the five parliamentarians entry (although Latvia and Lithuania had done so) based on the belief that promoting relations with Chechnya "might affect relations with other countries, primarily Russia." (ETA, 16 Jun 97)

While the Estonian government is apparently willing to court favorable relations with Russia to some degree, the country's military development plan sends another signal, as NATO admission continues to be the ultimate goal. According to Minister of Defense Andrus Oovel, the development plan through the year 2000 calls for reform of the training program, development of social guarantees for service personnel, development of infrastructure, and weapons/equipment modernization.

LATVIA

Crime brings profit to government officials
Corruption reportedly is alive and well in all branches of the Latvian government, according to a European Union commission (Literaturnaya gazeta, 5 Mar 97).
According to the EU experts, "one-third of the turnover of goods and services in Latvia is controlled by criminal groups, and 50 percent of the profits obtained by criminal means goes toward bribing officials." The experts also concluded that organized crime in Latvia is connected directly to Russia.

The government has attempted to control possible conflicts of interest within its ranks through the anti-corruption law passed last year which prohibits high-level government officials from retaining private sector positions simultaneously. Recently the law, and at least the appearance of impropriety, have brought about the resignations of several members of the government, including Minister of Defense Andrejs Krastins (Interfax, 9 May 97), Minister of Culture Rihards Piks (Radio Riga Network, 16 Jun 97), State Health Minister Juris Vinkelis (Interfax, 26 Jun 97), and Minister of Transportation Vilis Kristopans (Radio Riga Network, 21 Jul 97).

**LITHUANIA**

**Military faces shortage of healthy conscripts**

The Lithuanian military continues to be built on a somewhat shaky foundation. Besides chronic shortages of equipment and weapons, the armed forces must deal with a severe shortage of healthy conscripts. Only about 50 percent of those drafted actually show up, and more than one-half of those who show up are unable to pass the health examination, according to Defense Minister Ceslovas Stankevicius (ELTA, 11 Apr 97).

Still, the armed forces are managing to muster some troops capable of participating in international gatherings, such as the joint Baltic states squadrons BALTBAT, BALTRON, and BALTNET, as well as the Baltic Amber Sea '97 exercises, Cooperative Nugget exercises held in Louisiana in early June, and the Cooperative Safeguard humanitarian aid exercises scheduled for the end of July in Iceland (ELTA, 5 Jun 97).