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Russian Federation: Executive Branch

By Susan Cavan

PRESIDENT

President meets security commanders

Russian Television (NTV, 1500 GMT, 8 Oct 98; FBIS-SOV-98-281) broadcast footage from a Kremlin meeting between Yel'tsin and commanding officers from the military and security services. The apparent purpose of the meeting was twofold: to make assurances to the officers concerning the payment of back wages and to reassert presidential authority over the forces. According to an Interfax report (1949 GMT, 8 Oct 98; FBIS-SOV-98-281), Yel'tsin reminded the commanders that the security organs "have traditionally been subordinated to the president and will always remain so."

The timing of the meeting is interesting as it followed upon the heels of the day of planned mass protests. While participation in the demonstrations fell far below projected estimates, it is somewhat disconcerting to find that the president felt the need to remind his law enforcement officials just who is their chief commanding officer.

Health issues resurface

In the wake of his truncated visit to Central Asia, President Yel'tsin's health has once again become subject to close scrutiny and concern. Perhaps most notable this time around in the presidential health watch is the determined effort by Yel'tsin and his staff to show him, not in seclusion and resting, but defying doctors' orders and working in the Kremlin. (See, for example, NTV, 1000 GMT, 14 Oct 98; FBIS-SOV-98-287)
Despite assurances from the Kremlin staff and cabinet members, questions about Yel'tsin's fitness to serve out the duration of his term are sure to continue for the foreseeable future, or at least until the next Duma elections.

GOVERNMENT
Primakov to supervise security services?
The efforts to form a government in the wake of August's devaluation and Chernomyrdin's failed nomination have resulted in a remarkable number of incorrect and speculative reports on the composition and duties of the new government. With this caveat in mind, I pass along a report from ITAR-TASS (World Service, 0720 GMT, 7 Oct 98; FBIS-SOV-98-280) that Prime Minister Primakov distributed a list of duties and responsibilities of the prime minister and the deputies. Among Primakov's duties are the coordination of "matters related to military reform." He is also tasked with "ensuring the coordination of the work" of the MVD, FIS, FSB, Federal Border Guards, Ministry of Defense, the Federal Bodyguard Service and FAPSI. While the report noted that these were organizations that work "under the leadership of the president," several have been specifically subordinated to the president and administered by the presidential administration in the past.

Perhaps it was Primakov and not the mass protests that sparked Yel'tsin's review of his commanding officers?

FSB
Restructuring not to require major staff cuts
FSB Director Vladimir Putin, who has thus far retained his job despite persistent rumors of his dismissal, has announced that the presidential decree aimed at optimizing FSB performance will not result in substantial personnel reductions. "Insignificant cuts will be made among the support staff alone," Putin claims. (Interfax, 1353 GMT, 9 Oct 98; FBIS-SOV-98-283)
**Russia denies alliance with Cyprus...but guarantees S-300 contract**

Russian foreign ministry spokesman Vladimir Rakhmanin described as groundless, and virtually "provocative," the reports about the Russian defense minister allegedly sending to his Cyprus counterpart a letter proposing to institute "Russia's military alliance with the Republic of Cyprus." (ITAR-TASS, 1030 GMT, 6 Oct 98; FBIS-UMA-98-279) Despite the defense ministry's denial of any military alliance with Cyprus following a meeting with Cypriot Defense Minister Ioannis Omirou on 6 October, Russian Defense Minister Igor Sergeev guaranteed the delivery of the S-300 missile system and the fulfillment of related contracts. When Sergeev was asked specifically about the repeated Turkish threats to prevent, by force if necessary, the delivery of the S-300 system to Cyprus, he highlighted the "premature" nature of any response but stated that Russia was "closely watching the situation, studying the negative newness it is acquiring, and elaborating corresponding measures." (ITAR-TASS, 1030 GMT, 6 Oct 98; FBIS-TAC-98-279)

Given the fact that Turkish authorities have repeatedly threatened to use force in order to prevent the delivery of the S-300s to Cyprus, Igor Sergeev's guarantee would form the basis of at least a short-term military alliance that would cover the term of the S-300s' delivery and related contracts.

**Russia plays 'positive role' in international arena**

Prime Minister Yevgeni Primakov stressed Russia's positive role in a multipolar world following a meeting with Yasir 'Arafat on 8 October. As NATO threats of airstrikes against Kosovo were still very real, Primakov used the briefing to highlight the positive, productive role his country is playing in the world community despite the difficult times which Russia is facing. He stated that
Russia is "continuing to play an active role on the international arena." He told journalists that "Our (Russia's) role is positive, we do not confront anyone, and our role is aimed at reaching stability, resolving conflicts by peaceful means and establishing a just peace in various regions of the planet." (ITAR-TASS World Service, 1311 GMT, 8 Oct 98; FBIS-SOV-98-281)

Maintains close relations with rogue states
Primakov's comments came on the heels of a Libyan-Russian Cooperation Committee meeting as well as Sudanese praise for Russian-Sudanese cooperation. During the second session of the Libyan-Russia joint committee convened in Tripoli on 7 October, the Russian delegation pointed out the need to boost cooperation in all fields between the two countries. The Russian delegation also delivered a message from President Boris Yel'tsin to Libyan leader Mu'ammar al-Qadhdhafi, "expressing a number of considerations about the situation concerning Libya and prospects for bilateral relations." (ITAR-TASS, 0651 GMT, 9 Oct 98; FBIS-SOV-98-282, and Libyan Television Network, 1930 GMT, 7 Oct 98; FBIS-NES-98-280) Just two days prior to the Libyan-Russian contacts, the Sudanese ambassador to Russia, Izz ad-Din Hamid, hailed the continuing support being extended by Russia to Sudan. In an interview with the Russian daily Pravda, Hamid pointed out that the cooperation between Sudan and Russia began to increase in the past years, highlighting Russian economic assistance and the exchange of parliamentary delegations. (SUNA, 1845 GMT, 5 Oct 98; FBIS-AFR-98-280)

Mercenaries ready for Kosovo
Vladimir Litvienko, captain of the Kuban Cossack host, told Komsomol'skaya pravda of the imminent formation of a battalion of Cossack volunteers prepared to go to Yugoslavia at once, if required. And they would be making a selfless gesture, following their hearts, and not doing it for money, which the Serbs do not have anyway. "They are not the greenhorns that were dispatched to Chechnya," Vladimir Petrovich said, "They are all men -- military professionals with combat
experience in Abkhazia and the Dniester Region, and many of them have been
to Yugoslavia before, during the Bosnian war." Every day, reportedly, Cossacks
in various villages and Krasnodar itself call the captain, asking to be sent to help
the Serbs. There are several thousand of them now. All that is needed now,
according to Litvienko, is for the relevant bodies not to place any obstacles in the
way of enthusiasts wishing to help out their Slav brothers. Ideally these agencies
should help organize the volunteers' dispatch to Kosovo. "After all, that was the
case during the first volunteer recruitment," the captain explained, although he
did not specify which "relevant bodies" he meant. (Komsomol'skaya pravda, 13
Oct 98, p. 2; FBIS-SOV-98-286)

**Belligerent to bizarre, Moscow 'threatens' NATO**

From a Cossack call to arms to a change in the security balance in Europe, the
threat of NATO airstrikes against Serbian forces in Kosovo has evoked an
endless stream of threats and rhetoric from Moscow. Colonel General Leonid
Ivashov, head of the Russian defense ministry's main directorate for international
military cooperation, told journalists on 13 October that a NATO-led military
action in the Balkans would create a new military and strategic situation in
Europe. General Ivashov indicated that a NATO strike against Serbian forces
could result in a negation of the arms embargo against Serbia, and in what
Ivashov referred to as "full scale military cooperation." (ITAR-TASS, 10 Oct 98;
FBIS-SOV-98-283, and ITAR-TASS World Service, 13 Oct 98; FBIS-UMA-98-
286). Although several organizations in Russia indicated that they were willing to
send Slav mercenaries to Serbia, nullifying the existing arms embargo is the
most credible and perhaps most serious threat to Balkan security emanating from
Moscow. It appeared as though every member of the Duma had his/her own
version of a threat against the West last week but few if any had a bite to
accompany their bark. The predominant themes were a Duma delay, still further,
of START-II ratification and dissolution of the NATO-Russia treaty. Although
these threats may sound some alarms, they were primarily voiced for local
consumption and would serve only to damage Russian security interests in the Balkans and Europe.

**A Balkan Iraq-Kosovo victory for Russia**
Drawing a direct parallel to the Russian role in averting US-led military action against Iraq earlier this year, Primakov took credit for "easing the situation in Kosovo." Proclaiming Russian victory in an address to the Federation Council on 14 October, Primakov stated, "you simply (need to) look at how Russia's position is reckoned with in the world. This was the case during the Iraqi crisis, and this is the case now in Kosovo." Primakov stressed the role that the countless "threats" directed against NATO from Moscow played in the resolution of the Balkan crisis when he stated that "we openly declared that our attitude to NATO and our orientation would be considerably changed if Yugoslavia was attacked. And this was the crucial argument which played its role. Obviously, there will be no strike." (ITAR-TASS World Service, 0715 GMT, 14 Oct 98; FBIS-SOV-98-287)

**Ivanov downplays NATO, stresses role of OSCE**
During a press briefing on 13 October, Russian Foreign Minister Igor Ivanov, stressing one of the main themes of his predecessor Yevgeni Primakov, emphasized the role that the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) would play in securing peace in Kosovo. While avoiding any talk of NATO, Ivanov said that OSCE observers would be verifying the safety and security of the ethnic Albanians in Kosovo. He also noted that the OSCE role in Kosovo was a Russian proposal; "the idea of sending this mission came from Russia." (ITAR-TASS World Service, 1631 GMT, 13 Oct 98; FBIS-SOV-98-286)

Although the situation in Kosovo is far from resolved, the fact that NATO airstrikes have been avoided, for now, plays out as a Russian diplomatic success. This success, coupled with the enhanced role of the OSCE in Balkan security, serves to further the Russian position that the OSCE should play the lead role in security in Europe and NATO should be subordinate to the OSCE.
Preparations continue for Russian-Japanese summit

With the Yeltsin-Obuchi summit quickly approaching, Russia and Japan have discussed the text of a Russian-Japanese agreement on peace, friendship and cooperation. Discussion of the territorial issue, which is slated for the November summit, was omitted. (ITAR-TASS, 1348 GMT, 13 Oct 98; FBIS-SOV-98-286)

Although Yeltsin has promised to address the Japanese proposal on the Kurile Islands at the summit, domestic pressure may be enough to dissuade parliament from approving a territorial concession. In preparation for the summit, Japanese Foreign Minister Masahiko Komura spent three days in Moscow, meeting with Foreign Minister Ivanov, Prime Minister Primakov and President Yeltsin. Japan has put an emphasis on the conclusion of a peace treaty by 2000, to which the territorial issue is linked. (Kyodo, 0247 GMT, 13 Oct 98; FBIS-EAS-98-285)

Discussions have been complicated, but not thwarted, by a dispute regarding North Korean fishing rights in the waters off of the islands. The Japanese have suggested the DPRK received official Russian permission to do so and have asked that Russia withdraw that permission immediately. (Kyodo, 1152 GMT, 12 Oct 98; FBIS-EAS-98-283) For the Russian's part, bilateral economic cooperation continues to top the agenda in lieu of real progress on the territorial issue.

Six-way talks gain clear Russian support

As expected, Russia continues to support the Japanese initiative regarding the Korean Peninsula. The Japanese recently suggested six-way talks including the ROK, DPRK, China, Japan, the US and Russia. Russia is in a singularly strong position as a result of its good relations with the DPRK and ROK. In recent weeks, the Russian government has consistently expressed willingness to take part in any level of talks concerning security on the peninsula. (ITAR-TASS, 1344 GMT, 8 Oct 98; FBIS-SOV-98-282)
REGIONS
Primakov discusses center-regional relations

On NTV's "Big Money" program, Prime Minister Yevgeni Primakov suggested changes in the way the center and the regions relate to each other. In return for greater power for the governors both in Moscow and at home, the regions would ensure greater financial transparency. It was not immediately clear how this would be accomplished. Primakov also suggested that the regions might be able to boost their finances by gaining access to state holdings in local companies. Such a move would further the process of political and economic decentralization, but it might also open up new portions of the economy to graft by local power bosses.

Recognizing that the Russian economy cannot function without continued commercial interchange, Primakov also signed a government decree approving proposals by the finance ministry, agriculture and food ministry, commercial Agroprombank and investment Alfa Bank, to allow some portion of the debts owed by the regions to the center to be paid by deliveries of food and other raw materials. The decree stipulates that regional debts on 1997 loans from a special agriculture credit fund can be partially paid with grain, meat, sugar, vegetable oil and dairy product deliveries to the government's food bank. (ITAR-TASS, 0923 GMT, 3 Oct 98; FBIS-SOV-98-276)

The regions and center continue to scramble to effect some measure of relief for the citizens of the new Russia. And though the thought of creating a barter economy might seem to be a giant step backward in Russia's progression to a modern, capitalist society, it might be preferable to a massive issuance of new
rubles and the roaring inflation this implies. In general, barter payments are
denominated, as necessary, in pre-devaluation ruble rates, and until the ruble
stabilizes, in-kind commercial exchange will continue. (NTV, 0435 GMT, 30 Sep
98; FBIS-SOV-98-273)

**Boris Nemtsov tells why he was fired, discusses future**

In a lengthy interview, Nemtsov explains why he was sacked. Apparently his anti-
corruption campaign began to pinch the interests of the "oligarchs" who in turn
pinched Yel'tsin and other decision-makers. Nemtsov admits three mistakes: he
underestimated the power of the powerful, and he did not foresee the depth of
the resistance in the bureaucracy to reforms. They resented interference in their
individual fiefdoms. For example, there was much grousing when Nemtsov
required bureaucrats to drive domestic automobiles. Finally, Nemtsov admits that
a "more serious blunder" was his inability to explain to the citizens what he was
doing. (Obshchaya gazeta, 1-7 Oct 98; FBIS-SOV-98-287)

Nemtsov's admissions seem to support those who predicted that the idealistic ex-
governor of Nizhny Novgorod would find it difficult to effect real change in
Moscow given the Byzantine nature of its politics. However, it should be
underscored that Nemtsov ultimately failed because the president ceased to
back him, as he makes clear in this interview. This also suggests that Nemtsov
relied too much on Yel'tsin's largesse and was unable, or did not see it as
necessary, to construct a broad enough power base to withstand the inevitable
onslaught of those who were at the unpleasant end of his reforms and who also
had the president's ear.

Nemtsov is also standing for election to the Duma sometime in the near future,
and he is constructing a center-right political bloc. Yel'tsin recently appointed him
to the unpaid position of deputy chairman of the Council for Local Government.
His duties are to liaise with other regions. (ITAR-TASS World Service, 2220
GMT, 30 Sep 98; FBIS-SOV-98-274)
7 October draws fewer protestors than predicted
Russia's Ministry of Internal Affairs claimed that, as of 10:30 a.m. Moscow time, some 62,000 people were taking part in protests in eastern Russia and Siberia rather than the 225,000 predicted. The low turnout happened across the country as many people took advantage of the day as an unexpected but welcome holiday from work. (ITAR-TASS World Service, 0835 GMT, 7 Oct 98; FBIS-SOV-98-280)

The seeming lack of popular interest in the nationwide demonstration can be understood, among other things, to be a response to a lack of faith in the government to fix the mess it created.

Nizhny Novgorod finally elects a mayor
Yuri Lebedev has won the mayoral election in Nizhny Novgorod. Lebedev received more than 44 percent of the votes versus the 41 percent returned to his rival, the lawyer Dmitri Bednyakov. A total of 12.5 percent voted against both candidates.

The new mayor, age 47, was born in Nizhny Novgorod, worked as a history teacher, headed the Shakhunya District administration, and served as deputy governor and acting governor of Nizhny Novgorod Region. For about a year, until April 1998, he was President Yel'tsin's representative in the Nizhny Novgorod Region. He was removed from the post as a sign of presidential displeasure in response to the fiasco of the mayoral election on 29 March 1998. That election was won by Andrei Klimentev, but the result was declared invalid. (ITAR-TASS World Service, 2143 GMT, 11 Oct 98; FBIS-SOV-98-284) [ISCIP Note: for further information on the history of the saga surrounding the mayorship in Nizhny Novgorod, see "Jailed Nizhny Novgorod mayor registered for city election," Editorial Digest - Domestic Issues and Legislative Branch, Vol. 3, No. 12, 2 September 1998.]
**FEDERAL ASSEMBLY**

*Duma is considering the third charge against Yel'tsin*

The commission, set up by the Communist-dominated lower house of parliament, has produced two charges against Yel'tsin—the signing of the Belovezhie agreements which dissolved the Soviet Union, and the use of force against the Supreme Soviet (parliament) in October 1993.

A third charge being debated accuses the president of starting the war in Chechnya in late 1994. "We have not yet reached a draft conclusion," commission chairman Vadim Filimonov said, adding its members differ on how to assess Yel'tsin's actions. "All commission members agree that the president committed an abuse of power, but as for a homicide charge, this issue was not backed," Filimonov said. (ITAR-TASS, 1055 GMT, 12 Oct 98; FBIS-SOV-98-285)

**Russian Federation: Armed Forces**

*By Michael Reardon and Charles Drummond*

**Russia's CFE inspection report card--two A's**

The Conventional Armed Forces in Europe (CFE) Treaty, signed in Paris in 1990 and subsequently amended at Russia's request, subjects the total number of personnel of land-based and air forces on the continent, armaments and military equipment to reduction. The treaty's basic goal is to achieve a safe and stable balance of conventional armed forces in Europe. In early October, two multinational inspections were conducted to check armaments and military equipment information which the Russian side declared as of January 1998. These teams also checked how Russia is fulfilling its commitments under the CFE Treaty at these facilities.
From 29 September to 2 October, British military experts inspected a number of military facilities in the Moscow Military District, including air and motorized infantry units near Tver. (ITAR-TASS, 1525 GMT, 2 Oct 98; FBIS-SOV-98-275) A week later, Dutch experts finalized an inspection of military sites in the Russian Leningrad region. The inspectors visited motorized infantry units stationed near Kamenka for two days. (ITAR-TASS, 1930 GMT, 9 Oct 98; FBIS-SOV-98-283) Both inspections revealed no violations of the CFE Treaty. Of course, it is interesting that the results of these inspections were relayed to the press by an official from the Russian defense ministry -- not from the British or Dutch inspectors. On the slim chance conflicting results arise in the coming weeks, a follow-up will be carried in the next Editorial Digest.

The boxes should have been marked 'Contents not Authorized for Resale'

On 12 October, customs officials stopped a railroad train loaded with ammunition and weapons in the city of Osh in southern Kyrgyzstan. Officially listed as humanitarian aid, the cargo had originated in Iran, was headed for Tajikistan and from there was due for delivery by truck convoys to northeastern Afghanistan. That Afghan area is controlled by warlord Ahmad Shah Mas'ud, who fights against the Taliban. The train's 16 cars were found to be chock-full of essential humanitarian items such as Grad missiles, artillery shells, machine gun ammunition, antitank and land mines, infantry grenades and other humanitarian combat items, some of them Russian-made. Four other cars of the same train are unaccounted for--probably the ones carrying bread and milk. Kyrgyzstan's State Security Ministry, which took over the investigation from the Customs Inspectorate, seems to be keeping the affair under wraps.

It is an interesting coincidence that the story broke on the day when Russian President Boris Yel'tsin was in Tashkent to conclude a military cooperation agreement with Uzbekistan and Tajikistan. That tripartite alliance is directed against "Islamic extremism," and the Taliban is one target. (Jamestown Foundation Monitor, 15 Oct 98) Russian officials should be safe denying
involvement in the sale of arms to Afghanistan this time, and I'm sure they were as surprised as I was to hear that any Russian-made humanitarian items were emanating from Iran. Where could they have come from?

**Arms industry hopes that the sum of the 'parts' is greater than the whole**

In this period of declining sales of new arms systems, Russian arms exporters appear increasingly willing to broker more innovative arrangements to remain competitive. This "keep your foot in the door" mentality for a licensing agreement would make even Willie Loman proud, as preparations have been completed for the licensed production of Su-27SK fighters in China. Under this agreement, Chinese engineers will assemble the first planes at the Shenyang aircraft-building plant from parts supplied by the Komsomolsk-on-Amur Aircraft-Building Society (the chief Russian producer of Su-27SK fighters). As is customary in the world licensing practice, the first Su-27SK planes will be assembled with the help of Russian specialists from ready-made parts, assemblies, and systems. According to the issued license, China plans to build up to 200 Su-27SK fighters. Parts for three planes have been delivered to Shenyang already this year. (ITAR-TASS, 1306 GMT, 2 Oct 98; FBIS-SOV-98-275)

The Komsomolsk-on-Amur plant has provided the Chinese with the necessary blueprints and equipment for assembling Su-27SK planes. According to some reports, the total cost of the provided technologies is estimated at $150 million. The Russian plant is to deliver later approximately 30 percent of all the completing parts for the 200 Chinese Su-27SK planes. The most significant part of the contract is that the Russian side will also deliver AL-31F aircraft engines and radio-electronic equipment sets for all the assembled Su-27SK planes. This becomes the de facto enforcer of the export ban portion of the contract.

The contract should be very profitable for the Russian aircraft-building industry. Its implementation will guarantee orders to the Russians for many years to come. At the same time, the contract specifically stipulates that any modifications in the
Su-27SK fighter made in Shenyang can be effected only with the consent of the Russian side. This condition will remain in force not only during the serial production of Su-27SK planes in China, but also during the entire period of their use in the Chinese Air Force. (ITAR-TASS, 1306 GMT, 2 Oct 98; FBIS-SOV-98-275)

Deals such as this may be exactly what the Russian arms export industry needs - especially with a customer such as China. It is doubtful China will have the technological capability to produce quality weapons systems and platforms in the foreseeable future and Russia should continue to court this business partner to the maximum extent possible. Considering the depressed state of the Russian economy and the minimal sales over the past four or five years, long-term deals such as this may be the only way these Russian salesmen can avoid ending up like Willie Loman.

What's a '0' between friends -- or foes?
The Khasan Customs House post (located at the junction of three state borders: China, North Korea, and Russia) intercepted five MI-8 military helicopters during an attempt to smuggle them to North Korea. The helicopters were heading to the border from Khabarovsk Krai. During inspection, the helicopters were found to contain "Friend or Foe" identification equipment. It turned out that the accompanying documents lacked the signature of the chairman of the Russian Army General Staff Committee for Military Policy and the stamp of the Moscow Board of Trade through which the Arden firm had concluded the deal. The presence on board the helicopters of the "Friend or Foe" identification equipment, which is a military secret, is such a serious incident that Prime Minister Yevgeni Primakov was immediately notified about it. (NTV, 1200 GMT, 7 Oct 98; FBIS-SOV-98-282) Lucky for the Russian Federation they have such brilliant customs officers! It was reported that the customs officers' suspicion was aroused by the low price stated in the declaration -- just $20,000 -- whereas their market price is about $300,000 apiece. (NTV, 1200 GMT, 7 Oct 98; FBIS-SOV-98-282) I guess
that means if the unsigned, official documents carried a price of $300,000 on the
"smuggled helicopters" line, the customs officers would have let them pass.
Hopefully, smugglers won't check their "Smuggler's Price Book" before
attempting to transport those nuclear-tipped, Topol-Ms.

**Warning: Don't 'make' all your warheads in one basket**

At a news conference on 6 October, First Deputy Prime Minister Yuri Maslyukov
called for, among other things, construction of 35-45 new Topol-M missiles every
year starting in 2000 and several new submarines for the Navy. Maslyukov said
that these systems are necessary because existing weaponry is aging and will
start to be deactivated within two or three years. (RFE/RL Newsline, 8 Oct 98)
Earlier reports stated the annual Topol-M production rate would be a bit less, 31,
starting in 2000. (Jamestown Foundation Monitor, 17 Sep 98) Even the lesser
figure represents a significant portion of a meager defense budget. According to
RFE/RL, military analyst Pavel Felgengauer critiqued Maslyukov's proposals as
unrealistic. His argument was based on the premise that nuclear deterrence
could be assured for Russia with much fewer warheads than the 35-40 being
proposed annually. He added that the "Russian military-industrial complex can
survive only as a small, separate, narrowly specialized sector. If [Russia]
tries to continue the Soviet tradition of combining the development and
production of TV sets and teleguidance for aviation bombs at the same firm, then
television will spontaneously explode as they used to and half the bombs will
miss their target." (RFE/RL Newsline, 8 Oct 98)

It is difficult to analyze the Russian defense budget and determine exactly where
all the funds are (or are not) going. However, it is pretty safe to say that there
aren't enough funds to cover all the training, maintenance, construction and
equipping necessary to maintain the Russian military in a high state of readiness.
It is also safe to say that if a higher percentage of the available funds are
earmarked for Topol-M missiles, then there will be even fewer funds available for
readiness programs and, without some other change, this will spell disaster.
Though his number may need to be increased by an order of magnitude or two, I would have to agree with Felgengauer's prospect for the future when he said, "...if all of Russia's resources are used on nuclear deterrent forces, then conventional forces will suffer and Russia will be vulnerable to attack by a thousand well-trained guerrillas." (RFE/RL Newsline, 8 Oct 98)

A missile and a flame thrower for all my friends

Although the Russian economy is self-destructing, workers are still not receiving regular wages, and the Russian military is in the midst of downsizing, the push is on to sell newly developed and recently upgraded weapons systems. What may be the driving force behind the spate of weapons systems announcements, that indeed read more like advertisements? In short, hard, cold cash. During the last several weeks the Russians revealed two surface-to-air missile system upgrades, a new surface-to-surface missile, efforts to sell fighter aircraft to Australia, five attack helicopters en route to Bosnia-Herzegovina, a new flame thrower, and finally, the advantages of owning an S-300 system over the US Patriot missile. Each of these items is worth a quick analysis.

ITAR-TASS reported on 30 September on the new Buk-M1-2 air defense system. (ITAR-TASS, 1041 GMT, 30 Sep 98; FBIS-SOV-98-273) The press release touts the Buk-M1-2 as an "air defence missile complex" that can home in on land and water surface targets in addition to aircraft and cruise missiles. This "new" system is a development of the Buk-M1 surface-to-air missile (SAM) system, known in the west as the SA-11 "Gadfly." So, on first glance, it appears that the new variant is a significant upgrade to the standard SA-11. This is probably not true. In typical Russian fashion, an existing system has been incrementally modified to expand its capabilities. Reports from an air show at which this system was being promoted reveal that the primary difference between the two versions is a modified telar (teleporter-launcher). The telar, a tracked vehicle that serves as the missile carrier/launch platform, now incorporates a laser rangefinder, allowing ground targeting. The real purpose of the press report is in essence a
sales pitch, directed towards the "Asian-Pacific region and Latin America." The article, quoting from Military Parade magazine, took aim at a potential western competitor, the Evrosam, which is supposedly years away from having the capabilities that the Buk-M1-2 already has. In other words: Buy our system, please.

Information on an improvement to another SAM system was published by ITAR-TASS in the beginning of October. (ITAR-TASS, 1034 GMT, 2 Oct 98; FBIS-SOV-98-275) This system is the Fakel Machine-Building and Design Bureau's S-300PMU-2 Favorit air defense system (NATO reporting name: SA-10E). Just prior to the recent Greek "Defendory '98" arms exhibition, the Fakel company's chief designer was the subject of an interview in Moscow. Vladimir Svetlov detailed his company's achievement in producing new, smaller, and more accurate missiles for the S-300PMU. This upgrade is noteworthy from a military standpoint -- the smaller size allows an S-300 unit to transport and launch 16 of the new missiles, versus 4 of the older, larger missiles. Fakel and the Russian government are hoping that the missile upgrades will make the S-300PMU system even more attractive in the world arms market, where it is competing against the US Patriot system.

At the 10-day "Defendory '98" arms show, Russian defense minister Igor Sergeev was on hand to promote the S-300PMU. Sergeev was "sure" that the Russian system was much better than the Patriot, and assured potential buyers that the S-300 was compatible with NATO weapons systems. (ITAR-TASS, 1352 GMT, 7 Oct 98; FBIS-SOV-98-280) The Russians in particular were trying to convince Greece to buy the S-300 instead of the American system. Perhaps trying to butter up the Greeks in the hope that they would sign on the dotted line, Sergeev was noted to have remarked that the S-300s were in "great demand, so Russia only sells them only to its close partners." That short list (based on S-300 sales) currently includes Ukraine, Belarus, China, Bulgaria, and the Czech Republic. Greek Cypriots are, of course, scheduled to join that club, but their S-
300s have yet to arrive. A cynic might note that probably all it takes to become a "close partner" is the purchase of an S-300 system. Greece went with the Patriot but did agree to buy a shorter-range SAM system from the Russians.

A new surface-to-surface missile for the popular Grad multiple rocket launcher was announced in early October. (ITAR-TASS, 1220 GMT, 7 Oct 98; FBIS-SOV-98-280) There are about 3,000 Grad launchers deployed in over 50 countries, so the potential market for a new, more accurate weapon is quite large. The targeted customers are Middle East and Southeast Asian countries. A marketing program has been started by Splav, manufacturer of the missile, supported by the Russian government's arms export company Rosvooruzhenie.

Rosvooruzhenie's efforts in arms exports are far-ranging; recently company representatives visited Australia to acquaint that country's air force with the MiG-29 and Su-27 fighter aircraft. This was part of a larger overall effort to show what Russia could provide in upgrading Australia's air defense systems. (ITAR-TASS, 1221 GMT, 1 Oct 98; FBIS-SOV-98-275) The Royal Australian Air Force (RAAF) currently is equipped with US F-111 tactical bombers and F/A-18 Hornet strike-fighter aircraft. The F-111s have been envisioned to last until the 2010 time frame or beyond, as are the Hornets. While the RAAF is looking at the Russian planes, it seems unlikely that these particular Russian aircraft would be used to replace American aircraft. Although the Su-27 is an impressive airframe, capable of multi-mission employment (i.e., air-to-air and air-to-ground capabilities), both it and the MiG 29 have been around for quite some time. In fact, the MiG-29 and F/A-18 are of comparable vintage. It would make more sense, money permitting, for the RAAF to look at obtaining the F/A-18 E/F Super Hornet, now under test flight for the US Navy.

The Russians did have some recent success in selling aviation platforms, albeit on a small scale. Five of the ubiquitous MiG-24 "Hind" attack helicopters were
sold to the Federation of Bosnia-Herzegovina. (Sarajevo Oslobodjenje, 6 Oct 98; FBIS-EEU-98-279) That's not a large purchase, but hey, a sale's a sale.

From missiles, to aircraft, to helicopters, to flamethrowers: Russia would like to be your arms dealer. Described as a "jet-driven infantry flamethrower" with a range of up to 1,000 meters, the Shmel (bumblebee) is now for sale. The press report remarks that it has a "strong demoralizing effect," and we might heartily agree. The Russians state that they can offer this unmatched combat gear at a price "beyond compare"; perhaps even more favorable rates can be obtained if buyers show up with dollars in hand. (ITAR-TASS, 0943 GMT, 2 Oct 98; FBIS-SOV-98-275)

**Newly Independent States: CIS**

By Sarah Miller

**United on Kosovo**

Across the CIS, member states are adopting a united stance on Kosovo. Member states, led by Ukraine and Belarus, have voiced support for a diplomatic solution to the problems in Kosovo and have opposed the use of force against Yugoslavia. This stance essentially echoes Russia's, which has been opposed to NATO-led air strikes against Yugoslavia. (Tanjug, 1358 GMT, 12 Oct 98; FBIS-SOV-98-285)

**The CIS responds to the southern threat**

At a recent bilateral meeting, Uzbek President Islam Karimov and Boris Yel'tsin agreed that the Afghan situation presents a direct and serious threat to the southern borders of the CIS. As a result, the presidents pledged to "closely interact on bilateral and multilateral levels and actively participate in the U.N. efforts aiming to move the Afghan armed conflict into the vein of peaceful political decisions acceptable to all Afghans." The two further pledged to pursue the issue
Newly Independent States: Western Region
By Tammy Lynch

UKRAINE
A dash of bribery and a pinch of threats save the cabinet ... for now
The cabinet of ministers, led by Prime Minister Valeriy Pustovoytenko, survived a no-confidence vote by the Communist-dominated Supreme Council on 13 October. The measure, which needed 226 votes in favor to pass, fell 23 votes short. (RFE/RL Newsline, 14 Oct 98) A vote of no confidence would have forced the resignation of Pustovoytenko, but would not have affected President Leonid Kuchma, who is elected by popular vote.

The measure was backed by the Communist, Socialist and Hromada parties, which seemed to have the upper hand in the power struggle until shortly before the vote. The tide began shifting, however, when Pustovoytenko and Kuchma signaled their willingness to sacrifice "certain" unnamed ministers, and suggested that cabinet posts would be offered to parties who supported the government. Kuchma then announced that he would name Communist Party leader Pyotr Symonenko prime minister if the council voted out the current government. (Interfax, 1655 GMT, 12 Oct 98; FBIS-SOV-98-285) The possible cabinet posts within the CIS. (ITAR-TASS, 0818 GMT, 12 Oct 98; FBIS-UMA-98-285) This came just days after the commander of CIS Peacekeeping Forces in Tajikistan, Nikolai Pugachev, stressed that the threat from Afghanistan's Taliban shouldn't be dismissed since they will hardly "abandon the idea of aggression, with Tajikistan as their next target." (Radio Rossii, 0900 GMT, 10 Oct 98; FBIS-UMA-98-283) CIS peacekeepers in Tajikistan and the Russian Federal Security Service (FSB) have devoted a significant portion of their time to controlling drug trafficking and the stream of political asylum seekers attempting to enter Tajikistan. (ITAR-TASS, 1319 GMT, 1 Oct 98; FBIS-SOV-98-275)
and the not-so-appealing prospect of a parliament controlled by the Communist Party were apparently enough to bring together a coalition of seven parties in support of the current government. Interestingly, the coalition included the Peasant Party, which is led by Supreme Council Speaker Oleksandr Tkachenko, and which is ideologically aligned with the Communists on many issues.

The reward is coming, however. One day later, on 14 October, Kuchma announced that he soon would reshuffle the government, and is in the process of consulting with "various parliamentary groups to find professionals." The president also said he is increasing his efforts to facilitate the formation of a coalition that will represent a parliamentary majority. (Interfax, 1233 GMT, 14 Oct 98; FBIS-SOV-98-287)

Meanwhile, Symonenko, whom Kuchma threatened to name prime minister, said Communists are ready to "shoulder all the responsibility" of the government. (RFE/RL Newsline, 16 Oct 98) Unfortunately, they're not invited ... this year.

Comment
The possibility that Kuchma can bring together a coalition as a check against the three leftist parties is doubtful, but the chances that Pustovoytenko would survive this no-confidence vote were also slim. Just one month ago, most members of parliament reportedly believed that the government would fall. In fact, Oleksandr Turchinov, leader of the Hromada Party, told reporters on 16 September that he had a commitment to support the no-confidence motion from 230 MPs. (IT-TASS, 0930 GMT, 16 Sep 98; FBIS-SOV-98-259) Both Kuchma and Pustovoytenko have so far shown themselves able to straddle delicately the gap between the necessary economic reforms championed by the West, and the pressures of a left-leaning, reactionary parliament. The situation is, however, similar in many ways to that found in Russia at the height of President Boris Yeltsin's power, with one or two men standing in the way of a return to Soviet-style policy. For now, Supreme Council Speaker Tkachenko seems to understand that presenting at
least the appearance of a united government is of utmost importance in the current crisis. The parliament, however, remains on the verge of devolving into a mirror image of the Russian Duma.

Debate over the fiscal year 1999 budget will begin in earnest during the next month. Kuchma has proposed an austere budget supported by the IMF, while the parliament has asked him to reduce the cuts found in the budget. When the debate is over, it should be much clearer in which direction the parliament will lead Ukraine.

All for one and one for all
The four GUAM countries -- Georgia, Ukraine, Azerbaijan and Moldova -- are increasing their lobbying efforts for development of a "multi-option pipeline system to ship Caspian fuel." The countries released a joint statement on 6 October after a meeting at the Ukrainian Embassy in Washington. The meeting included the Ukrainian, Moldovan, and Georgian prime ministers, as well as a senior presidential advisor from Azerbaijan. All were in Washington for the annual meeting of the World Bank. The statement outlined several major goals of the organization, including the pipeline, development of a "Eurasian transport corridor," and efforts to deal with "growing challenges and threats to global and regional stability and security." (Interfax, 1059 GMT, 6 Oct 98; FBIS-SOV-98-279) During the World Bank meeting, US Energy Secretary William Richardson announced his support for the Caspian oil pipeline, which would transport oil from Azerbaijan, through Georgia, Ukraine and Poland to Western markets. (Jamestown Foundation Monitor, 7 Oct 98) The leaders did not comment, however, on recent reports that, in preparation for the pipeline, the GUAM countries have agreed to establish a joint battalion of peacekeepers to be deployed as needed in the Abkhazia and Karabakh regions. (For background, see Ukrayina Moloda, 17 Sep 98, p. 5; FBIS-SOV-98-278)
I couldn't afford to buy anything even if you paid me...
Prime Minister Pustovoytenko said last week that the government has been unable to reduce the volume of unpaid salaries to state workers, and said the state budget now owes $935 million in back wages and social benefits. (RFE/RL Newsline, 14 Oct 98) The country now has only $1 billion in currency reserves at the most. Meanwhile, the official inflation rate for the first nine months of the year was 6.1 percent, while the value of the hryvnya has fallen 79 percent during that same period. (Interfax, 0845 GMT, 13 Oct 98; FBIS-SOV-98-286)

BELARUS
Betrayed!
President Alyaksandr Lukashenka lashed out this week at several countries of Central Europe for not uniting in support of "our Slavic brothers," the Serbians. Bulgaria and Rumania received the brunt of his wrath for "conspiracy to the crimes being prepared at the Balkans." He was "shocked," he said, shocked. "Our Slav unity is sacred. Suddenly, it is all betrayed, stomped out," he cried. He warned that his "attitude" toward these states "has morally changed." Belarus, he said, would "make pertinent conclusions with regard to ... relations with these countries." (Interfax, 1213 GMT, 13 Oct 98; FBIS-SOV-98-286) Curiously, these statements had little effect on the policies of the Central European countries, which granted NATO permission to overfly their countries for airstrikes against Serbia.

Meanwhile, Lukashenka offered "modern arms to combat both missiles and aircraft" to Serbia, and set up a headquarters to recruit "volunteers with various military qualifications, in order to provide military support for the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia." (Interfax, 1414 GMT, 9 Oct 98; FBIS-UMA-98-282, and Belapan, 1550 GMT, 9 Oct 98; FBIS-SOV-98-282)

At least we still have each other
Just one month after Russian Prime Minister Primakov said, "We will do everything to ensure that the union becomes stronger" between Russia and Belarus (ITAR-TASS, 1137 GMT, 30 Sep 98; FBIS-SOV-98-273), the Russian Duma has ratified two military agreements that create a legal framework for cooperation between the military forces of the two countries. Most importantly, the treaty on "regional security" details the guidelines for "forming, controlling and training an armed forces group for ensuring the two countries' security." Belarus has already ratified these agreements. (Interfax, 1621 GMT, 2 Oct 98; FBIS-SOV-98-275, and ITAR-TASS World Service, 0804 GMT, 2 Oct 98; FBIS-SOV-98-275)

**Drozdy, chapter 10**

As diplomats continue to stay away from Minsk after being forcibly evicted from the Drozdy diplomatic compound, President Lukashenka recently unveiled a new reason why the evictions were necessary. Lukashenka originally said that the compound needed renovations. Then he said he needed more room for his presidential property. Now, it seems that certain unnamed foreigners were planning to assassinate Lukashenka, and their base of operation was Drozdy. Lukashenka gave an interview on 6 October and ominously explained, "It is probably too early to talk about this, but the president's life hung by a thread, ... and that crime, unfortunately, had been prepared a few steps from where we are standing now." The correspondent reporting this story on the state-run BTK Television Network added "By the way, the site where Alyaksandr Lukashenka was answering this question is situated not far from the famous Drazdy.... It looks as though not everything is so simple in the Drazdy issue." Indeed. (BKT Television Network, 1800 GMT, 6 Oct 98; FBIS-SOV-98-282, and Jamestown Foundation Monitor, 7 Oct 98)

**MOLDOVA**

It's going to be a long, hard winter
The Moldovan government this week turned over a portion of its gas distribution system to the Russian gas monopoly Gazprom as partial payment for debts totaling over $600 million. At the same time, the government reportedly issued $90 million in state obligations to Gazprom, with a 7.5 percent annual interest rate. The actions came after Gazprom reduced service to Moldova by 50 percent and threatened to eliminate service completely by the end of November.

The IMF, which has been holding back on extending loans to the country, has criticized the state obligations plan for its negative effect on the country's external debt. Meanwhile, Gazprom will reportedly receive a 51-percent share of the gas distribution system. Moldova will retain 35 percent, and the breakaway republic of Transdniestr, which is responsible for two-thirds of the entire Gazprom debt, will receive a 14-percent share. There was no explanation as to why Moldova was unable reach a deal with Gazprom similar to those reached by Belarus and Ukraine. Both countries agreed to repay their debts with goods and/or services. (Jamestown Foundation Monitor, 8 and 16 Oct 98)

Comment
With this agreement, Moldova has, in effect, placed a leash around its own neck. Gazprom, which is heavily tied into the Russian government, and Transdniestr, which wants to be heavily tied into the Russian government, now control the only gas distribution system in Moldova. The only question is, when and how will the leash be pulled?

Speaking of Transdniestr ...
The latest round of talks between Moldova and representatives of the Dniestr Region have been postponed indefinitely. It is unclear why the two sides were unable to meet. (ITAR-TASS, 0950 GMT, 1 Oct 98; FBIS-SOV-98-274) Moldova has announced, however, that it is pulling out one peacekeeping platoon (82 men) from the Dniestr area. The troop removal is the first following the 20 March Odessa agreement, in which Moldova and Transdniestr agreed to reduce their
peacekeeping troops by 200 men each. The state-run press wrote, "The Moldovan side expressed hope the initiative would be followed by the Dniestr side."(Infotag, 1930 GMT, 12 Oct 98; FBIS-SOV-98-285) There has been no comment from Dniestr, and it would appear that, given the strong current political position of the region, none will be quickly forthcoming. The Odessa agreement makes no provision for a reduction in Russian peacekeeping forces.

Newly Independent States: Archival Revelations

By Miriam Lanskoy

Concerning the September-October 1993 coup attempt

Dmitri Volkogonov’s notes dated 31 August 93:
A few days ago, on 24 August, I hosted a visit by members of the American delegation which was looking into the question of Americans who had disappeared in the Soviet Union. After the discussion, Colonel Par and another American diplomat asked to hold a short confidential meeting.

When only the three of us remained, Par said, "US Ambassador Pickering asked that we confidentially relay information from a reliable source in Moscow, who informed us that in October the opposition will attempt a coup, possibly a parliamentary uprising to remove President Yel'tsin. We can neither confirm nor deny the veracity of this information. It is possible that people will be stirred up, the president will be charged with violating the constitution, and an announcement of his removal from power will follow. Possibly this will happen at the Congress. Intensive preparations are underway. Such is our information...."

I thanked them and told Filatov and Ilyushin (two people close to the president) at the first opportunity. Later I told B.N. He reacted calmly, "That is to be expected." I think that is only one possible scenario of the revanche of the Communist
Thermidor.... (Volkogonov papers, Box 13, Reel 8, in the Manuscript Reading Room of the Library of Congress)

Comment
If the information the Americans supplied was indeed true, it suggests that the events of September/October were not the unfortunate results of personality and policy differences. Rather the opposition was involved in a conspiracy against the president and would use the differences over the constitution as a pretext to force him out of office.

Concerning Georgian politics
Dmitri Volkogonov's notes dated 5 October 1992: Aslan G. Abashidze asked to receive him in private. An hour-long meeting was held on 5 October.

The main point: Abashidze does not conceal his pro-Russian leaning. "I do not conceal in Georgia that I am a Russophile." According to him, Shevardnadze does not make any decisions on his own. He is in the hands of Kitovani and other criminal elements. They need him to serve as cover. I want to ask Yel'tsin not to pull the army out of Ajaria. Russia must be firm in its dealings with Georgia; that way it will be valued higher. If a referendum on staying with Russia were held now -- although the suggestion is totally fantastical -- 90 percent would say yes.

Russia must remove weaponry from Georgia (e.g., that which belongs to its armed forces). Instead, to influence, we should be more active in the use of personal contacts.

On Chechnya: If Yel'tsin invites Dudaev to Moscow, he will come immediately. This will improve the situation in the Caucasus in general.
In sum he asked to see the president. "Russia should not abandon the Caucasus. Its place will immediately be filled by Turkey, Iran and other countries. Russia should leave, in order to remain...."

M.D. Male, an adviser to the president on conversion, and I wrote a note to B.N. Yel'tsin asking him to receive Abashidze. (Volkogonov papers, Box 13, Reel 8, in the Manuscript Reading Room of the Library of Congress)

**Comment**

This note contains an apparent contradiction: The Russian military should stay in Ajaria but pull its weapons out of Georgia. It seems that Abashidze wants the Russian military presence to remain only in his region, where it can support him, and pull out of the rest of Georgia. Or perhaps he meant pulling weapons out would ensure that they would not fall into the wrong hands.

The timing of the conversation is interesting since it takes place only a few months after the start of armed hostilities in Abkhazia. Yet they fail to mention Abkhazia explicitly in the conversation. Surely the question of Russia's continued presence has bearing upon that conflict.

It seems that Yel'tsin was told several times before the start of the war that Dudaev needed a face-saving way of reaching a compromise with Russia. Dudaev tried on several occasions, through the mediation of Ingush President Ruslan Aushev, to achieve such a meeting, yet each time the advisors closest to Yel'tsin thwarted this possibility. [For more details on Dudaev's efforts to secure a meeting with Yel'tsin, see Carlotta Gall and Thomas deWall, Chechnya: Calamity in the Caucasus (New York and London: New York University Press, 1998), pp. 76-102.]

Newly Independent States: Central Asia
KAZAKHSTAN

January presidential elections sanctioned by parliament

In spite of all his previous assertions to the contrary, President Nazarbaev will indeed stand in a presidential election one year before his term of office was officially expected to end. On 8 October, in a special joint session of both chambers of Kazakhstan's parliament, legislators passed a resolution calling for new presidential elections to be held in approximately three months, on 10 January 1999. (Kazakh Radio First Program Network, 0700 GMT, 8 Oct 98; FBIS-SOV-98-281)

The Kazakh parliament's decision to hold early presidential elections is generally viewed as a response to President Nazarbaev's 30 September State of the Nation Address, in which he called for a number of reforms in electoral procedure, governmental power distribution, anti-corruption measures, press freedoms, and government support for women's civil rights. Among the most significant of his proposals for government reform were: the suggestion to add ten seats to the Majlis (the lower chamber of the Kazakh parliament), to be filled based on proportional representation; to abolish the requirement of a 50-percent turnout of eligible voters in order for election results to be deemed valid (a requirement which dates back to Soviet times); to abolish the 204,000 tenge (over US$2,500) fee which candidates in parliamentary elections are currently required to pay in order to obtain a place on the ballot (Agence France-Presse, 1415 GMT, 30 Sep 98; nexis); to eliminate the president's role as chief of the Supreme Judicial Council (Kazakhstan's highest court); to create a commission for women's issues and to increase the number of women serving on all state bodies; to establish a ministry of state revenues to oversee tax collection and customs inspection; to reduce the size of government structures; to redefine government ministers' powers, as well as the degree of their accountability for the success or failure of their ministries' work; and to hold the prime minister
directly responsible for the ministers' rate of achievement. (Kazakh Television First Channel, 0317 GMT, 30 Sep 98; The British Broadcasting Corporation, 3 Oct 98/nexis)

The most surprising, and oddly enough, the most contentious, change that President Nazarbaev called for was his proposal to transfer a portion of his powers to the prime minister and to the parliament. He stated that the prime minister should be granted a certain amount of authority in the approval or discharge of government ministers (currently, only the president has this authority), and that parliament be given the right to draft constitutional amendments, provided that 80 percent of the deputies vote in favor of the proposed amendments. (Agence France-Presse, 1415 GMT, 30 Sep 98; nexis)

Far from hailing the president's suggestions to enlarge their powers, however, parliamentary deputies rejected them and then issued their own demands to the president. In addition to calling for early presidential elections, MPs also proposed increasing the terms of office for the president (from five to seven years), for senators (from five to six years), and for Majlis deputies (from four to five years), as well as introducing a change in the minimum age requirement for presidential candidates (from 35 to 40 years of age). The parliament voted to abolish the maximum retirement age for the president, which had previously been set at 65. President Nazarbaev is presently 58; by 2006, when the next presidential term of office comes to an end, he will have turned 65. (Agence France-Presse, 1210 GMT, 8 Oct 98; nexis)

Comment
This rather odd tug-of-war between President Nazarbaev and the parliament is generally considered to be simply a tacit agreement to enlarge slightly each side's authority. In return for the power to propose constitutional amendments, parliament will permit the president to extend his term of office into the 21st century, by giving the opposition parties so little time to organize their own presidential campaigns that President Nazarbaev's reelection is virtually assured.
A number of the most prominent opposition members (e.g., Petr Svoik, Akezhan Qazhygeldin) have also been the subjects of vigorous smear campaigns by the government. The rest of the reforms called for by President Nazarbaev could be viewed as his first campaign promises, particularly his promises to ensure the supply of heat and electricity to Kazakh citizens, to subsidize partially Kazakh farmers by buying one million tons of grain from them at "fair" prices (current world prices are low) and to set aside 25 billion tenge of the state budget for paying wages, pensions, and creating new jobs. (Agence France-Presse, 1415 GMT, 30 Sep 98; nexis) Whether the rest of his proposals turn out to be little more than window dressing to boost his credibility in the eyes of both his domestic and foreign critics remains to be seen.

**KYRGYZSTAN**

**Wheat shortage expected; government looks for international aid**

The Kyrgyz government appealed to international relief organizations to donate 20,000-30,000 tons of wheat. Due to an overly cold spring, Kyrgyzstan's grain harvest is expected to be at least 60,000 tons short of last year's totals. A second reason for the anticipated wheat shortage is the fact that many farmers have apparently given up grain cultivation in order to produce fruits and vegetables instead. (Interfax, 0859 GMT, 30 Sep 98; FBIS-SOV-98-273)

**Large coal deposits found in the southeast**

Geologists from the city of Osh have now discovered two large coal deposits in Kyrgyzstan's southeastern districts, not far from the Uzbek border. Both deposits are located in the Turkiston-Alai Ridge where prospecting is being conducted at the request of the Kyzylkiya Komur joint-stock company and other, smaller businesses. The most recently discovered coal deposit in Chon-Alai District is approximately 9-20 meters below the earth's surface, and is 16-17 meters wide. (Vecherniy Bishkek, 10 Sep 98, p. 5; FBIS-SOV-98-275)

**TAJIKISTAN**
Foreign ministry refutes allegation of Taliban POWs on Tajik territory
On 29 September, Tajikistan's foreign ministry issued a statement to the press in which it firmly denied a Pakistani newspaper's recent charge that approximately 80 prisoners of war from the Taliban's forces are being held in Tajikistan. The Pakistani newspaper alleged that Northern Alliance General Ahmad Shah Mas'ud had moved a group of prisoners whom he had captured from the Taliban to the Tajik city of Kulob. Tajikistan's foreign ministry rejected this accusation as misinformation intended to portray the Tajik government as guilty of meddling in Afghanistan's internal affairs by supporting one of the groups involved in the current Afghan conflict. The foreign ministry statement also emphasized the Tajik government's desire for a peaceful settlement of the Afghan conflict and its oft-repeated calls for the cessation of outside interference in Afghanistan's domestic affairs. (ITAR-TASS, 1650 GMT, 29 Sep 98; FBIS-SOV-98-272)

Police station bombed in center of Dushanbe
At 11:25 a.m. local time on 1 October, a package carrying an explosive device was thrown out of a car window at the Dushanbe city police department, located in the center of town. According to investigative experts, a bomb containing the equivalent of 500-600 grams of TNT had earlier been placed underground, outside the police department building. No one was injured in the blast, but the building incurred a fair amount of damage. No information was available about the assailants' identities at the time of the report. (Interfax, 0749 GMT, 1 Oct 98, and ITAR-TASS, 0748 GMT, 1 Oct 98; FBIS-TOT-98-274)

Government, UTO issue ultimatum to illegal armed groups
On 1 October the Tajik government and the United Tajik Opposition (UTO) leadership released a joint statement in which they offered those UTO forces and independent militia groups who have so far refused to disarm one final opportunity to relinquish their weapons and cease their attacks against civilian populations. The members of these illegal armed groups were given one week in which to disarm. All those who complied with this deadline were provided security
guarantees and promised exemption from prosecution. Those who refused to meet this deadline would be subject to forcible disarmament in a joint government-UTO operation. Two militia leaders were singled out in the statement as being responsible for the majority of crimes: Saidmukhtor Yorov and Rawshan Ghafurov, who were both defined as renegades, unaffiliated with either the Tajik government or with the UTO. (Radio Tajikistan First Channel Network, 1200 GMT, 1 Oct 98; FBIS-SOV-98-274)

In a later news conference on an Iranian radio program, UTO Chairman Said Abdullo Nuri provided a few additional details about militia leader Saidmukhtor Yorov. Mr. Nuri stated that Yorov's troops had agreed to serve under UTO Commander Umar earlier in the disarmament process, but had then refused to accompany Commander Umar to another camp. It was at this point that the UTO leadership expelled Yorov's men from its ranks. (Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran, 1600 GMT, 6 Oct 98; FBIS-UMA-98-280)

**IMF, World Bank have reconfirmed their commitment to aid Tajikistan**

Tajikistan's presidential press service informed ITAR-TASS on 7 October that high-level representatives from both the IMF and the World Bank have reassured the Tajik government that they are fully committed to helping the country implement economic reforms. The Tajik government has launched a three-year economic development program, which the IMF and the World Bank have pledged to support with US$340 million. Tajikistan's National Bank has already received the first tranches of these funds. (ITAR-TASS, 1921 GMT, 7 Oct 98; FBIS-SOV-98-280)

**TURKMENISTAN**

**No success in debt negotiations with Ukraine**

Ukrainian Deputy Prime Minister Anatoli Golubchenko was in Ashgabat on 30 September, to hand President Niazov the Ukrainian president's proposals for settling at least a part of Ukraine's $704 million gas debt. Due to the effects of
Russia's financial crisis, the Ukrainian economy is having difficulties with its balance of payments and currency reserves. Consequently, President Kuchma put forward a plan to repay part of his country's debt to Turkmenistan with commodities, at prices approved by the Turkmen government. The Turkmen government rejected this plan. Relations between the countries remain cordial enough, however, that the two sides are continuing to discuss collaborating in various bilateral projects, including the construction of a salt plant in western Turkmenistan (in the town of Gaurdak), the reconstruction of compressor stations, and building a bridge across the Amu Darya River in eastern Turkmenistan. (Interfax, 1537 GMT, 1 Oct 98; FBIS-SOV-98-275)

Protocol signed with Turkmen-Turkish gas pipeline project
On 5 October Turkmenistan's Minister of State Energy Yolly Gurbanmuradov and Turkey's Minister of Energy and Natural Resources Cumhur Ersumer signed a protocol in Ankara on their countries' collaboration in a "Turkmen-Turkish-European Natural Gas Pipeline via the Caspian Sea and the Selling of Turkmen Natural Gas to Turkey." The protocol details the steps to be taken in preparing the official agreement on this project, which was scheduled to be finalized on 20 October in Ashgabat. (Anatolia, 1422 GMT, 5 Oct 98; FBIS-WEU-98-278)

Amnesty granted to prisoners on 50th anniversary of Ashgabat earthquake
In order to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the earthquake which destroyed much of Ashgabat, President Niazov decreed an amnesty on 6 October, according to which approximately 8,000 prisoners who were being held while under investigation were to be released. The amnesty included approximately 800 women, 180 minors, World War II veterans, men over the age of 60, cancer and tuberculosis patients, anyone having received a suspended sentence, people with less than one year left to serve, people sentenced to ten years or less for an unpremeditated crime, and those who received sentences of five years or less for a premeditated crime. Prisoners who were convicted on murder, terrorism, high treason, abuse of power or on drug-related charges were
Newly Independent States: Baltic States

By Kate Martin

Same song, different singer
The man who replaced Yevgeni Primakov as Russia's foreign minister demonstrated (as if there were any doubt) that Russia's foreign policy would not soften with Primakov's ascension to prime minister. In an address to the United Nations General Assembly on 22 September, Igor Ivanov warned that "Russia cannot and will not remain indifferent to the fate of hundreds of thousands of Russian-speaking citizens subjected to harsh repressive measures in Latvia and Estonia." (General Assembly, 53rd session, 9th plenary meeting, 22 September 1998; Official records of the United Nations, A/53/PV.9) Alas, no concrete examples of repression sprang to Mr. Ivanov's mind. Indrek Tarand, of the Estonian foreign ministry, later reminded the assembly that the UN and the Council of Europe had both decided to end their monitoring programs in Estonia because there was no evidence of human rights violations. (Baltic News Service Daily Report, 1500 GMT, 26 Sep 98)

Two weeks after his trip to New York, Ivanov repeated another of Primakov's favorite sentiments, concerning NATO expansion. "There is a red line which we regard as a cardinal change directly connected with our security," Ivanov told reporters for the Spanish newspaper La Vanguardia. "This line goes along the border of the former Soviet Union, including the Baltic states." (Interfax, 1106 GMT, 8 Oct 98; FBIS-SOV-98-282)

ESTONIA
Goodbye, Mr. Ilves
After months of media speculation as to whether he would leave his post, and encouragement to do so by his political opponents, Estonian Foreign Minister Toomas Hendrik Ilves presented his resignation to Prime Minister Mart Siimann on 30 September. (Baltic News Service Daily Report, 1000 GMT, 30 Sep 98)

"[F]oreign policy is less and less of a priority for many political forces, especially for the ones in government. ... For populist reasons, foreign policy decisions are not being made any more.... Looking at recent attacks by leading politicians in the government coalition on Estonia's foreign policy and the Estonian Foreign Ministry, I can only conclude this is happening only because of my party alignment," Ilves explained. (Radio Tallinn Network, 0900 GMT, 30 Sep 98; FBIS-SOV-98-273) While he generally does not comment on ministerial shufflings, President Lennart Meri told reporters that he thought Ilves' resignation was the right step, given the impossibility of serving simultaneously in opposition, as party chairman, and in government, as minister. (Estonian Television Network, 1800 GMT, 30 Sep 98; FBIS-SOV-98-273)

LATVIA

In-country voters show more flexibility that their counterparts abroad

Apparently eligible voters living outside Latvia are less flexible about citizenship issues than their counterparts inside the country. According to preliminary reports, only one-sixth of the 30,000 eligible voters living abroad participated in the 3 October polling; however, a large majority (65 percent) of that 5,000 rejected the proposed amendments to the citizenship law and supported the conservative and nationalist Union For the Fatherland and Freedom/LNNK (47 percent) that had forced the referendum on the amendments. Clearly these voters did not serve as a reliable indicator for either the parliamentary elections or for the fate of the referendum, which did pass in the end. Continuing the trend of backing conservative parties, voters abroad also supported the People's Party (26 percent), while Latvia's Way garnered 11 percent. (Baltic News Service, 1551 GMT, 7 Oct 98; FBIS-SOV-98-280). As reported in the previous Digest, preliminary results indicate that voters in Latvia were more broad-based in their
political support. In fact, no segment of the political spectrum received a clear mandate, and a coalition government appears to be the only viable solution. With proportional representation, the Saeima will be almost evenly divided. Right-center groups received 42.48 percent of the votes (The People’s Party, 20.93 percent, For the Fatherland and Freedom/LNNK, 14.15 percent, and the left-of-center New Party, 7.4 percent), while their opponents received 45.32 percent: Latvian Way Union garnered 18.22 percent, and will be accompanied by members of the People's Harmony Party (14.23 percent) and the Latvian Social Democratic Union (12.87 percent). (Radio Riga Network, 1100 GMT, 4 Oct 98; FBIS-SOV-98-277)