1999-01-13

The ISCIP Analyst, Volume IV, Issue 1

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http://hdl.handle.net/2144/11922

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Russian Federation: Executive Branch

By Susan Cavan

PRESIDENT

Yel'tsin increases public activity
It would be hard to imagine a more "low profile" approach to public governance than Boris Yel'tsin's general performance throughout the last several months, so it is with great hesitation that one characterizes his recent flurry of activity (speeches, tongue-lashings for ministers, and the ceremony surrounding the new union with Belarus) as a return to hands-on leadership. As one former apparatchik notes, however, it would also be wrong to count him out altogether. Sergei Yastrzhembsky (currently a member of the Luzhkov administration) recently warned, "those who have crossed him off the list of active politicians are mistaken." (Interfax, 0933 GMT, 6 Jan 99; FBIS-SOV-99-006)

APPARAT

Borodin gains a supervisor
According to a report from The Moscow Times (13 Jan 99; nexis), President Yel'tsin has given the already powerful General Bordyuzha supervisory authority over the Kremlin's Business Affairs office. Details on the scope of Bordyuzha's oversight of the agency are not yet available, but it is unlikely that longtime Economic Manager Pavel Borodin will welcome this development.

SECURITY COUNCIL

Barsukov is back
General Mikhail Barsukov's renowned "closed-mouth" reaction to his summary dismissal in June 96 has finally paid its dividends. In an edict from late
December, the president named Barsukov to the Security Council as head of its military inspectorate. According to an Interfax report (1716 GMT, 23 Dec 98; FBIS-SOV-98-357), this new inspectorate "controls the operation of the armed forces and other troops, military formations and agencies. It also checks on the fulfillment of plans for military development and for the creation and production of armaments and military equipment and of dual-purpose know-how."

The same report cited Barsukov on his relationship with the president and his family: "We are neighbors and maintain good-neighborly relations." It is, for the moment, unclear what the status of relations is between Barsukov and SC Secretary Bordyuzha. Time will tell.

Yel'tsin also made other appointments to the Security Council at the end of December: Foreign Minister Igor Ivanov was decreed head of the Interdepartmental Commission for International Security under the Security Council; and Border Service Chief Konstantin Totski was named head of the Interdepartmental Commission on the Border Policy under the Security Council. (ITAR-TASS, 2211 GMT, 25 Dec 98; FBIS-SOV-98-539)

**MVD**

**Award follows reprimand**

Despite (or is it because of?) earlier public presidential criticism of his handling of crime and Chechen kidnappings, MVD Chief Sergei Stepashin received the Order of Valor from President Yel'tsin on 30 December. (ITAR-TASS, 0913 GMT, 30 Dec 98; FBIS-SOV-98-364) Stepashin had earned the award, according to presidential spokesman Yakushkin, for his "great personal contribution to strengthening law and order."

**FSB**

**Spat brewing between procurator and FSB?**
As 1998 came to an end, the FSB quietly closed its investigation into "extremist" comments made at various rallies by well-known, "extreme" nationalist figures. The case, which targeted General Albert Makashov, Stanislav Terekhov and Viktor Anpilov, among others, stems from their antisemitic remarks, which Procurator Skuratov characterizes as "inciting racial hatred." The procurator turned the investigation over to the FSB, for possible prosecution under Article 280 of the Russian Criminal Code. (Interfax, 1815 GMT, 29 Dec 98; FBIS-SOV-98-363)

The General Procurator, however, has deemed the FSB decision to close the case as unlawful and has returned the charges to the FSB for another investigation. (ITAR-TASS, 1903 GMT, 10 Jan 99; The BBC, 10 Jan 99/nexis)

**Russian Federation: Foreign Relations**

By John McDonough and Sarah Miller

**Another pillar in Moscow's multipolar world**
Russian Prime Minister Yevgeni Primakov recently concluded an official visit to India on 22 December. While in India Primakov met with the Indian prime minister as well as the president, vice president and other high-ranking officials. During Primakov's visit a number of bilateral documents were signed concerning legal and criminal issues; the development of commercial, economic, industrial, financial, scientific and technical cooperation; a consular convention and an agreement on the implementation of a program for cooperation in military technology until 2010.

The Indian government described Primakov's visit to India and the talks that he held as warm, friendly and traditional to Russian-Indian contacts. According to an Indian government statement, "both sides express their satisfaction that Russian-Indian cooperation is developing successfully in all areas [and] agree to map out
new ways for the joint use of the enormous potential which exists in Russia and India." This same press release indicated that Russia and India planned to work actively toward a strategic partnership that would be the cornerstone of Russian-Indian relations well into the 21st century. (ITAR-TASS World Service, 0941 GMT, 22 Dec 98; FBIS-SOV-98-356)

India, a longtime benefactor of Soviet military hardware and technology as well as financial assistance, has continuously worked to improve its relationship with the Russian Federation following the breakup of the Soviet Union. The strength of this partnership was revealed when Russia, although denouncing India's nuclear test, refused to support sanctions directed against India. A Russian-Indian summit planned for 1999 will only further strengthen this relationship and may result in a more formal relationship as well as Russian sponsorship for an Indian seat on a Russian-led initiative to expand the UN Security Council.

Moscow blasts Butler...calls for UNSCOM reform
Moscow’s diplomatic maneuvers following US-led strikes against Iraq ranged from benign to boisterous, but little if any carried any real punch with the possible exception of the latest attacks against the United Nations Special Commission and its chairman, Richard Butler. Although it appears unlikely that Iraq will agree to UNSCOM resuming its work anytime soon, Russia's Ambassador at the United Nations Sergei Lavrov has begun a campaign to ensure any new UN mission in Iraq is not led by Butler. Lavrov stated that "the publication of the UNSCOM report that was used as a pretext for carrying out attacks against Iraq in December was an act of provocation. It contained inaccuracies, half-truths, and open lies." As a result, Lavrov added, Russia can "no longer trust UNSCOM Chairman Richard Butler." (Radio Rossii Network, 1900 GMT, 7 Jan 99; FBIS-SOV-99-007)

Lavrov's attacks on UNSCOM and Richard Butler may constitute the first step in attempts to create a new version of UNSCOM with an even greater Russian
presence, as well as a reduced US and British presence, in Iraq. This process was formally initiated in Moscow nearly simultaneously with Lavrov's statements. Moscow's support for Iraqi initiatives to replace US and British citizens implementing the UN humanitarian program in Iraq with citizens from other countries (Interfax, 1202 GMT, 6 Jan 99; FBIS-SOV-99-006) may be the first move in Moscow's campaign to eliminate US presence on any UN team in Iraq.

**Russia and Iran continue to defend 'peaceful' cooperation**

In what has become an expected event, both the Russian foreign ministry and official Iranian sources spent the end of 1998 defending the Iranian nuclear program and denying allegations of the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and missile technology. In an 11 December statement issued partly in response to a New York Times article on Iran's biological warfare program, Vladimir Rakhmanin, a spokesman for the Russian foreign ministry, said that Moscow has taken note of Western media reports of Iran's attempts to hire Russian researchers for the development of biological weapons. He repeated that Russia "has been and will continue to abide by international standards for weapons of mass destruction and missile delivery systems." (Interfax, 1224 GMT, 11 Dec 98; FBIS-TAC-98-345) The following day the Iranian media issued similar statements deriding the US policy toward Iran and its relationship with Russia. The Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran stated that the US is attempting, within the framework of its defeated policy on isolating Iran, to undermine Iran's relations with other countries, including Russia. (Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran, 1100 GMT, 12 Dec 98; FBIS-NES-98-346) A week later Iranian Foreign Minister Dr. Kamal Kharrazi emphasized that the nuclear plant Iran is building with the cooperation of Russia is for peaceful purposes. Kharrazi added that the construction of the nuclear power plant of Bushehr in southern Iran is being supervised by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). (IRNA, 1051 GMT, 22 Dec 98; FBIS-NES-98-356)
Moscow's and Tehran's insistence that the Bushehr facility in southern Iran is intended solely for peaceful purposes has become a weekly event that has served the Primakov government well as a tool to demonstrate Russian support for the emerging Iranian-Russian partnership. As long as the IAEA, even though it has a questionable track record, continues to supervise the project, Iran and Russia can deny allegations and gain international support for the program.

**Russia questions CFE treaty, may not 'stick to every letter’**

Russia has recently called on NATO to renegotiate the Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe (CFE) prior to the planned NATO expansion this year or face possible Russian noncompliance with the CFE treaty. In a special declaration to the press the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs pointed to the need to complete negotiations on amending the CFE prior to the formal expansion of NATO. That treaty, signed in 1990 by NATO and Warsaw Pact countries, established permissible ceilings on conventional weapons for the member countries of both military-political blocs. (Interfax, 0855 GMT, 2 Jan 99; FBIS-TAC-99-002) Following the autumn session of talks on the adaptation of the CFE Treaty in Oslo, Moscow stated that decisive progress on several outstanding inspection and verification issues must be reached before new members are officially admitted to NATO. Moscow is concerned that new NATO countries are not covered under the current CFE inspection guidelines. (ITAR-TASS World Service, 0753 GMT, 2 Jan 99; FBIS-TAC-99-002)

Russia has emphasized that it may not comply with the current version of the CFE. A foreign ministry statement issued in early January stated that Russia cannot be expected to "stick to every letter of the document [if] Russia's right to carry out inspections on the territory of new NATO member states as fully as on the territory of the present NATO countries will be infringed on.” (Interfax, 0855 GMT, 2 Jan 99; FBIS-TAC-99-002)

**Reports of Russo-Japanese 'interim treaty' firmly rejected**
Just two months after Russian President Boris Yeltsin and Japanese Prime Minister Keizo Obuchi signed the Moscow Declaration (see Editorial Digest, 4 Nov 98), the roar of the territorial issue has resurfaced. An article in the Japanese newspaper Yomiuri has sparked fierce rejections from both the Russian and Japanese governments. According to the article, there exists a secret "interim treaty" that would return two of the Kurile islands to Japanese control prior to the conclusion of a peace treaty. (Jamestown Foundation Monitor, 7 Jan 99) Until the November Moscow summit, Japan had been unwilling to negotiate a peace treaty independent of the Kurile Islands issue. While the Moscow Declaration represented little forward movement on the territorial issue, it seemed to indicate Japan's willingness to negotiate the peace treaty and territorial issue in separate fora. (ITAR-TASS, 0851 GMT, 9 Dec 98; FBIS-SOV-98-343) Domestically, the postponement of a firm decision on the fate of the islands has fueled dissent in the Far East regions of Russia. The Sakhalin Duma has opposed the creation of a territorial subcommittee, saying that it "puts in question the territorial integrity and the state sovereignty of the Russian Federation." (Interfax, 1257 GMT, 3 Dec 98; FBIS-SOV-98-337) Despite the distrust voiced in Yomiuri and the regions, cooperation efforts appear unaffected. The first of several working meetings between Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Grigori Karasin and his Japanese counterpart, Minoru Tamba, have proceeded as scheduled. Furthermore, former First Deputy Prime Minister Anatoli Chubais has secured permission from Prime Minister Obuchi to commence the YeES Rossii (Unified Energy Systems of Russia) project to supply electrical energy to the northern portion of Japan. (ITAR-TASS, 2155 GMT, 2 Dec 98; FIBS-SOV-98-337)

'Strategic triangle' or security blanket?
Following a meeting with Indian Foreign Minister Vajpayee, Russian Prime Minister Yevgeni Primakov advocated the formation of a "strategic triangle" consisting of Russia, India and China. (Deccan Herald, 22 Dec 98; FBIS-NES-908-356) While Primakov did not elaborate on the comment, Russian Defense
Minister Igor Sergeev explained that the triangle would be a security and stability arrangement, not a "a military bloc." (Interfax, 1824 GMT, 21 Dec 98; FBIS-SOV-98-355) Although Sino-Russian relations benefited from the recent Moscow summit and a common stand against the US-UK bombing of Iraq, Indian-Chinese relations have some distance to cover before relations are fully normalized. (Xinhua, 1530 GMT, 19 Dec 98; FBIS-CHI-98-353)

**Mutual assistance permanently excluded**
During the most recent Pyongyang-Moscow friendship treaty negotiations, automatic military involvement was officially scrapped. The newest version of the treaty will replace the 1961 Treaty of Friendship, Cooperation, and Mutual Assistance that was discarded in 1996. Under the old treaty, each side was required to assist the other in the event of a military conflict. (Yonhap, 0437 GMT, 22 Dec 98; FBIS-EAS-98-356) In response to questions about the new treaty, Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Grigori Karasin said that neither side has "any special reasons to be in a hurry to conclude the treaty," but that the Russian government wishes to "compile a contemporary universal document that would be [operational] for 20-30 years." (ITAR-TASS, 1357 GMT, 2 Dec 98; FBIS-SOV-98-336)

**Russian Federation: Domestic Issues and Legislative Branch**

By Michael Thurman

**FEDERAL ASSEMBLY**

**Ex-communist admits to 'cash for votes' practice in the State Duma**
Duma Deputy and ex-CPRF member Vasily Kobylkin admitted that he was offered $10,000 to vote for Chernomyrdin, and another $10,000 for Kirienko. According to Kobylkin, the Communists were seriously worried that the Duma
would be dissolved as a result of the third rejection of either candidate, and thus sought to insure members’ cooperation through financial compensation. Kobylkin noted that as “[s]urprising as it may seem, deputies discussed the amounts in a completely relaxed manner in elevators, corridors, and offices.”

The practice of “compensating” Duma members for their votes is, according to Kobylkin, widespread. For instance, should a Duma member succeed in bringing federal funds home, the region's governor may be expected to provide that deputy with a "commission" for his or her efforts. Even more brazen, a deputy may approach another deputy and announce a price for support of a given bill or amendment. Not all support need be purchased in cash. Foreign vacations or promises to aid in the resolution of personal or professional problems may be requested. Kobylkin notes that budget negotiations are particularly lucrative.

"It is political naivete to think that the Communists of old were bribe takers and the current ones are honest people. The difference is only that then [communists] did it secretly while now they do it openly,” said Kobylkin. (Komsomol'skaya pravda, 1 Dec 98, pp. 1-2; FBIS-SOV-98-335)

**REGIONS**

**Heads of regional legislatures set up joint body with Federation Council**
A Union of Legislators of Russia was registered in December with the Ministry of Justice. The organization brings together members of the Federation Council and leaders of the regions' legislatures. Leon Kovalsky, head of the Samara Regional Duma, was elected chairman of the presidium of the union. Kovalsky said that the aim of the new union is to strengthen the legal base and coordinate legislators' efforts in drafting regional legislation. Currently, 53 regions are members of the union, but it is expected that the membership will surpass 70 by the end of January. The association will hold its first conference in January. (ITAR-TASS World Service, 1130 GMT, 3 Dec 98; FBIS-SOV-98-337)
Considering that the Federation Council is itself populated by the governors and the heads of legislatures of the 89 regions, it is not immediately clear what purpose the new union shall serve. What is interesting is that the new Union of Legislators of Russia is another example of the contemporary Russian penchant for inventing institutions in the hope that "this one" will make a difference. But such institution-making may not be too surprising as Russians seek to organize themselves in the face of change without strong leadership. Who knows, one of these institutions may indeed turn out to be extremely important one day.

**Where, oh where, have the regions' wages gone?**

Again exposing the growing inability of the federal authorities to lead the country, the finance ministry is asking 17 regions where the money earmarked for the payment of wages for teachers, doctors, and cultural workers has gone. Federal funds sent to pay current wages have not been disbursed by 17 regions (including Adygeya, Buryatia, Altay Kray, Magadan Oblast, Chukotka Autonomous Okrug, Koryak Autonomous Okrug, Kemerovo Oblast, Arkhangelsk Oblast). (Rossiyskaya gazeta, 10 Dec 98, p. 1; FBIS-SOV-98-344)

To some degree it must be expected that, with the abrogation of federal leadership, the regions have established their own priorities and will spend federal funds received as they see fit, regardless of the initial conditions upon which such grants are dispensed by the center. There is simply no effective way to bring the regions to heel; Moscow will have to keep this in mind when negotiating countrywide solutions to problems. It is very important to include the interests of the regions in the list of considerations when drafting national policy.

**CONSTITUTIONAL COURT**

**Court permits three-time submission of same candidate**

Ruling on Article 111 of the Constitution, the Constitutional Court agreed with the president that he may submit the same prime ministerial nominee to the State Duma for approval three consecutive times. The issue became contentious when
President Yel'tsin submitted Sergei Kirienko's name to the Duma three times when seeking to replace Viktor Chernomyrdin. Led primarily by the CPRF, many members of the Duma argued that the president had to submit three different names. (Interfax, 1058 GMT, 11 Dec 98; FBIS-SOV-98-345)

Russian Federation: Armed Forces
By Michael Reardon and LCDR Fred Drummond

Russia's strategic defense reaches the new millennium two years early

In a year otherwise marked by crises, failures and economic strife, the Russian Federation has apparently chalked one up in the win column for 1998 by fielding a regiment of Topol-M missiles, what many in Russia have proclaimed as their "strategic jewel for the 21st century." On 27 December, Defense Minister Igor Sergeev attended the inauguration of the first Russian regiment of Topol-M single warhead intercontinental ballistic missiles (designated by NATO as SS-27). (Interfax, 0901 GMT, 27 Dec 98; FBIS-SOV-98-361) Speaking at a ceremonial inspection of the Taman Strategic Missile Division at Tatishchevo missile base in the Saratov region, Sergeev commented on the modernization program by saying, "We faced the need to revive all rocket construction technologies." A nation must make its strategic weapons "with its own hands, and Russia has accomplished this task." (Interfax, 1616 GMT, 27 Dec 98; FBIS-SOV-98-361) He went on to say that "adoption of Topol-M ... would preserve Russia's security and independence by keeping its missile and nuclear potential intact [for the] foreseeable future."

Announcement of the regiment's entry into active service follows the successful test launch of a Topol-M ICBM from the Plesetsk launch site on 9 December. (ITAR-TASS World Service, 0822 GMT, 9 Dec 98; FBIS-SOV-98-343) Commenting after the launch, Vladimir Yakovlev, CINC Strategic Missile Troops (SMT), stated that "the task of developing and introducing Topol-M missiles in the
SMT, which was set by the supreme commander [Yel’tsin] and the Defense Minister [Igor Sergeev]," has been successfully carried out. Then, predicting what many high officials have been touting for some time and what would prove true later in the month, he said that the first stage of the new missile complex would be ready in 1998. (ITAR-TASS World Service, 0822 GMT, 9 Dec 98; FBIS-SOV-98-343)

The press service of the SMT told ITAR-TASS that the 9 December launch was the sixth test launch of the missile. (ITAR-TASS World Service, 0822 GMT, 9 Dec 98; FBIS-SOV-98-343) Later in December, Interfax reported that the Topol-M "has passed six test launches." (Interfax, 1616 GMT, 27 Dec 98; FBIS-SOV-98-361) These statistics further cloud the missile's testing phase, since an October 1998 test launch ended in failure. (See Editorial Digest, Vol. III, No. 16) Notwithstanding, Sergeev told reporters, "The main testing operations for the Topol-M are now over but there still remain four tests to do." (Interfax, 1616 GMT, 27 Dec 98; FBIS-SOV-98-361)

Coincidentally, the activation of the missile regiment comes on the heels of the US-British bombing of Iraqi targets and in time for the endgame of the 1999 budget discussions. With its conventional forces decaying rapidly, it appears some Russians are using the first regiment of Topol-Ms as a means to tell the West they still have considerable military muscle available. Additionally, Deputy Premier Maslyukov is using the Topol-M success to push for ratification of the START-II treaty by showing Duma members that there is a solid, working plan to replace the aging strategic force and to lobby for increased defense spending to accomplish his lofty goal of 10 more of these Topol-Ms in 1999 and upwards of 40 annually thereafter.

Kosmos-3M rocket narrowly misses Santa Claus
December 1998 was a successful month for Russian Strategic Missile Troops (SMT). On 10 December, they successfully launched a Kosmos carrier rocket
from the Plesetsk space site. This rocket put two satellites in orbit -- the Russian Nadezhda rescue apparatus and the Swedish Astrid-2 scientific satellite. The Nadezhda space apparatus is to become part of the Kospas-Sarsat system which will be used to search for vessels and aircraft. (ITAR-TASS World Service, 1209 GMT, 10 Dec 98; FBIS-SOV-98-344)

[Later in the month, the SMT narrowly escaped having a second successful rocket launch marred by a mid-air collision with an airborne sleigh. Shortly after 2300 on 24 December, a Kosmos-3M rocket launched by Strategic Missile Troops from the Plesetsk northern state testing cosmodrome apparently came within three meters of a sub-sonic, reindeer powered aircraft which was manned by a single pilot. Sources who asked to remain anonymous stated the aircraft escaped with no mechanical difficulties and only slight burn damage to some of the cargo. The pilot could not be reached for comment.]

The Kosmos-3M rocket released a Kosmos-2361 artificial satellite into orbit. The satellite is intended for use in the interest of the Russian defense ministry. (ITAR-TASS World Service, 0720 GMT, 25 Dec 98; FBIS-SOV-98-359) This particular launch proved doubly beneficial for strategic forces as it was promptly spotted via electronic means by the Space Missile Defense (SMD) forces. According to a source within the Russian defense ministry, the carrier rocket was tracked dependably after its start was spotted, and the information about it was transmitted to the central command post of the strategic missile forces. (ITAR-TASS, 2246 GMT, 24 Dec 98; FBIS-SOV-98-358)

The task of the SMD forces is to spot launchings of ballistic missiles, to determine the beginning of an enemy missile attack, and to inform top state government officials and the military command. They ensure the retaliatory and counter-retaliatory actions of the nuclear forces. It is the duty of the SMD units to reconnoiter and control the outer space, to furnish warnings about the flights of foreign reconnaissance and other space systems. (ITAR-TASS, 2246 GMT, 24
Dec 98; FBIS-SOV-98-358) The final success occurred on 30 December, this time from the Baykonur cosmodrome. At 2135, a Proton booster rocket successfully carried three satellites of the Glonass system into space. (ITAR-TASS World Service, 1936 GMT, 30 Dec 98; FBIS-SOV-98-364)

The timing of these launches was very opportune as Rosvooruzhenie (Russia's major arms exporting company), the Russian Security Council, the Russian Strategic Missile Troops, and major players in the Russian aerospace sector all participated in hosting the "Second International Conference on Russian Light and Medium-Class Booster Rockets in Space Projects of the 21st Century." This conference, primarily designed to promote Russian space launch services to foreign customers, conducted its last day of business out at the Plesetsk cosmodrome, observing the 10 December launch mentioned above. (ITAR-TASS, 1445 GMT, 8 Dec 98; FBIS-SOV-98-342) Yuri Khozyainov, Rosvooruzhenie's first deputy general director, has set up a space and special projects department to handle exports of products and services in the fields of space programs, cartography, information technologies, and double-purpose services. (ITAR-TASS, 1445 GMT, 8 Dec 98; FBIS-SOV-98-342) Khozyainov also stated that his company was in consultations with the Russian Space Agency to determine appropriate separation in their areas of responsibility for delivering space services to foreign customers.

Cyprus keeps tourists -- sends missiles to Crete

In January 1997, Cyprus and Russia signed an arms deal in excess of US$500 million to ship S-300 air defense systems to Cyprus. The terms of the contract included an 18-month delivery window. This controversial deal raised eyebrows in several countries, for a multitude of reasons. The most vocal country was Turkey, Cyprus' primary reason for procurement of the systems in the first place. Throughout 1997 and 1998, Turkey threatened to take any measures necessary to stop delivery of the systems, including the use of force. Russia countered Turkish threats with continued commitment to deliver the systems. After several
delays, the Greek Cypriot government announced in September 1998 that delivery of the air defense systems would be again postponed until autumn, possibly November, rather than chancing any repercussions in the summer when the tourist season is at its peak in Cyprus. (See Editorial Digest, Vol. III, No. 12)

Well, it appears now as if those tourists have taken up squatters' rights and don't plan on leaving anytime soon. On 29 December, Glavkos Klirichis, president of the Republic of Cyprus, announced that he had returned from a lengthy meeting with Greek government officials and decided that the Russian-made S-300s would be deployed to Crete instead of Cyprus. (CyBC Television Network, 1846 GMT, 29 Dec 98; FBIS-SOV-98-363) Besides the tourists, this change produces some interesting political impacts/questions for those involved and can be explored from various angles.

Will the decision enhance Cyprus' chances for accelerated admission into the European Union? Will the US "pay back" Cyprus for its cooperation with added pressure on Turkey to end a quarter-century of military occupation of Cyprus? Will Greece's stature in Europe be raised for its participation in Klirichis' decision? Will Turkey's role in the region increase now that it has successfully derailed the arms deal, at least to Cyprus? Is/was the US more concerned about stability in the area or prevention of Russia's further expansion into the arms market in the Eastern Mediterranean area?

Each could form the basis for its own editorial, however, views from Moscow are more pertinent for this discussion. Since penning this deal 24 months ago, Moscow has been steadfast in its commitment to fulfill the terms of the contract. Even after news of Klirichis' decision reached Moscow, the Russian foreign ministry announced that it expected the Greek Cypriot side to respect the main provisions of the contract on the purchase of the S-300 missiles and that any changes should be discussed with Russia first. (Anatolia, 1051 GMT, 30 Dec 98; FBIS-SOV-98-364) However, there are signs that Russia may be warming up to
what appears to be the inevitable. On 7 January, Russia's ambassador to Cyprus said that Nicosia's recent decision not to deploy Russian S-300 air defense missile complexes on the island would in no way harm relations between Russia and Cyprus. Ambassador Georgy Muradov's remarks followed a meeting with Cypriot President Kliridhis. The two sides reportedly also discussed the costs of storing the S-300 missiles in Russia, as well as possible complications in shipping the complexes to the Greek island of Crete rather than to Cyprus. In view of Russia's friendly relations with both Greece and Cyprus, however, Muradov suggested that any difficulties in that area should be easily overcome. (Jamestown Foundation Monitor, 8 Jan 99)

The Russian arms sales industry may receive some short-term benefits for its S-300 troubles. Since the S-300s cannot provide the same anti-air umbrella for Cyprus against a Turkish opponent from their newly designated location on Crete, Cyprus may be in the market for a much smaller defense weapon in the Russian-made TOR-M1 missile. The TOR-M1 missile has a much smaller range (12km vs. 200 km) than the S-300 and, therefore, cannot intercept incoming Turkish aircraft in Turkish airspace. However, it does have the advantages of increased flexibility and rapid firing capability. (I Simerini, 1354 GMT, 4 Jan 99; FBIS-WEU-99-004) Any firm TOR-M1 deal is still in the discussion phase, and far from concrete reality at this point. I'm sure the tourists in Cyprus would have to be consulted first to verify they would rather have the smaller missile screaming over their vacation spots.

A final point on the redeployment to Crete is that, though the missiles have apparently been ready for shipment from Russia since 15 December (I Simerini, 1354 GMT, 4 Jan 99; FBIS-WEU-99-004), there is substantial infrastructure which must be put in place prior to making the systems combat-ready. This infrastructure, which has been completed on Cyprus, will have to be replicated on Crete at a cost of many millions of dollars and a 6- to 12-month construction delay. (Alithia, 1605 GMT, 29 Dec 98; FBIS-WEU-98-363) During this period,
whether the missiles remain in Russia or are delivered to Crete, they will not be able to be placed in "combat-ready" status. Of course, learning from the past, the first step on Crete will be to accomplish a market survey to determine if the tourists agree with basing the missiles there.

**Money from nothing, and my troops for free**

Russia rang in the new year with the confirmation that the total number of personnel serving in its armed forces is now down to 1.2 million. (Interfax, 0853 GMT, 28 Dec 98; FBIS-SOV-98-362) The same press release stated that the armed forces now are comprised of "four arms" instead of the previous five. President Boris Yeltsin was quoted as saying that this change makes it easier to "control the Armed Forces," which is certainly an interesting comment. One of the prime motives for the downsizing and reorganization is monetary, of course. There simply isn't money available to pay over a million service members reliably, maintain existing infrastructures, and still harbor desires for new and upgraded weapons systems.

Defense Minister Igor Sergeev, in a speech to the State Duma in mid-December, described the troop reduction as part of the overall reform of Russia's military. Approximately 133,000 officers and warrant officers were to be released from duty, but unfortunately not all were expected to be "fully paid because of the lack of finances." Despite that last point, Tass reported, Sergeev noted that the government was planning to "raise salaries of servicemen by 1.6 times on January 1, 1999, and double rank payments on July 1, 1999." (ITAR-TASS, 1856 GMT, 11 Dec 98; FBIS-SOV-98-345) The proposed pay increases were repeated in various subsequent press releases, including the release of Yeltsin's decree on the pay raises on Christmas Day. (ITAR-TASS, 1350 GMT, 25 Dec 98; FBIS-SOV-98-360) Other beneficiaries of the decree are internal affairs staff, penal system employees, customs and federal tax police personnel.
While this sounds like a great Christmas present, outside observers must ask the question (once again): "Where is the money coming from?" After all, one of the recurring stories from 1998 was the monthly drama of promises, pronouncements, and complaints concerning paying current and back wages to servicemen and other government employees. We don't expect that the refrain of this tune will change any time soon.

One statement made by Sergeev in his Duma speech that was omitted by Tass, but reported by Interfax, was that the defense ministry received only half of its earmarked funds for the year. Sergeev singled out food rations as being underfunded, but assured the Duma that the "[s]ervicemen are receiving their three meals a day." (Interfax, 1547 GMT, 11 Dec 98; FBIS-SOV-98-345) Perhaps Sergeev made this comment in response to a statement made by a State Duma deputy to the press on 9 December. The Tass report's leading sentence charged that the "Russian Armed Forces have plunged to the lowest possible level of nutrition," and the official was quoted as saying it was a "gruesome situation." (ITAR-TASS, 1426 GMT, 9 Dec 98; FBIS-SOV-98-343)

Not surprisingly, others in Russia are not happy with the direction taken in the armed forces downsizing efforts. Back in the beginning of December, Tass reported on comments made by a colonel who was described as "an expert on the Russian State Duma Committee for Security." The colonel criticized the low level of projected defense funding in the new year's defense budget. He argued for an increase of the stated 2.6 percent of GDP for defense to 3.5 percent, and even then that would only ensure adequate subsistence for military personnel. The colonel stated that "the President has instructed that funds totalling 3.5 percent of GDP should be set aside for defense needs every year." (ITAR-TASS, 1122 GMT, 4 Dec 98; FBIS-SOV-98-338) We'll see what the Duma ends up saying. A month later the Russian Air Force commander in chief echoed similar complaints. Actually, the CINC was more blunt, and stated that air force capability is diminished, including the ability of the Russians to counter such
threats as carrier battle groups. (Radio Rossii Network, 1800 GMT, 3 Jan 99; FBIS-SOV-99-003)

There are some interesting things going on here. Taken together, the press reports from December paint a multi-layered picture. At the top are the downsizing and reorganization efforts, necessary in large part due to the federation's economic crisis. Then there are the reports from military and civilian authorities acknowledging that military personnel are surviving, but conditions are still bad. Note the two-way dialogue going on here. Sergeev gives essentially a status report: The troops are being fed, and oh by the way we need some more money. Then come the countering statements that in essence say: The troops aren't dying of malnutrition, yet, and by the way, we need to spend more on the military. This then leads to the justification for the promised pay increases, with the by now increasingly unnecessary reminder that a fed and paid army is a happy army.

At the bottom there are the occasional reminders of external threats (i.e., more justification for money), and perhaps a reminder to the Russian people of the importance of the armed forces in a time of austerity and no real foreign military threat. Comments such as those made by the Air Force commander in chief, alluding to the United States as a (continued) potential threat to the homeland, are entertaining from our viewpoint, but certainly serve domestic political purposes. The question on that last point is: To what degree do Russian officials believe their own rhetoric on outside threats? Old mindsets are hard, and slow, to change.

But don't downsize my job
Given all the talk about reducing the number of personnel in the armed forces, Komsomol'skaya pravda editorialized on Yeltsin appointing almost 100 new general officers. Back in 1997 Yeltsin "fulminated" about the number of general officers on the books, then totaling around 1700. The figure was decreased to
1500, with more projected cuts promised by the defense ministry. Recently an edict was signed by the president promoting almost 100 Army officers to the rank of general, however, prompting the newspaper to speculate that the reason was to bolster Yel'tsin's power base. In that vein the newspaper also cited the appointing of a "career general" to head the presidential staff as "very revealing." (Komsomol'skaya pravda, 16 Dec 98; FBIS-SOV-98-350) It's always useful to have the heads of your armed forces friendly and on your side when you're running a country. Oh yes; make sure to promise pay increases, too.

Yel'tsin also recently signed another edict concerning senior officers. One of the particular provisions allows the extension of active duty for those who have reached the maximum retirement age. Contracts will allow one-, three-, or five-year extensions, with a total limit of ten years duration. Defense Minister Sergeev is just one of the senior officials who can now stay beyond the previous limit. In its report, Komsomol'skaya pravda reminded readers that under the USSR system, defense ministers stayed until they could no longer physically hack it. This may not be a problem with Sergeev, the paper suggests, because of the hostility directed at him by the "top generals" for some of his reform measures. He's not expected to stay in the job when Yel'tsin is no longer in office. (Komsomol'skaya pravda, 6 Jan 99; FBIS-SOV-99-006) The main source of dissatisfaction with Sergeev centers on his proposal to consolidate all nuclear forces into one command and take operational control of those forces away from the General Staff. Guess a hundred new friends isn't turning the tide of feelings from within the military structure towards the number one man in the defense ministry.

Crime and punishment

Some high-ranking Russian officers have found their own personal way to deal with the current monetary-troubled times; unfortunately, some of them have been caught. Tass reported on the Main Military Procurator's Office proceeding with criminal charges against an unspecified number of generals accused of
Corruption and bribery amongst flag officers occurred in the USSR (after all, if you were a general officer, and you didn't have your own dacha by the time you retired, you were obviously not taking appropriate advantage of your position in service of the people's defense), and it was only to be expected that such practices would continue in the Russian Federation. What is different now is that some of the officers are actually being prosecuted. Every once in awhile there are examples of the rule of law in the empire.

Rossiyskaya gazeta reported on an "unusual" military anticorruption unit in the North Caucasus. Lieutenant Colonel Aleksandr Tolmachev, who previously risked his career by giving the newspaper accounts of military wrongdoing, was named to head the special unit. Tolmachev contributed articles that told of various generals profiting from their positions; now he gets to oversee the pursuit of legal actions against such malefactors. Rossiyskaya gazeta characterized these criminal characters in uniform as "highhanded generals, who confuse the state's pockets with their own ...." (Rossiyskaya gazeta, 1 Dec 98; FBIS-SOV-98-342)

Justice seems to be working within the military in other instances. On the 80th anniversary of the military justice system, according to Tass, the head of the military courts system stated that "[o]ver 20,000 officers and senior NCO's went to court last year." At first reading this looks really bad; is crime that rampant within the military? The answer is no, in this case. Here service members are availing themselves of the military judicial system to right injustices suffered by them. The reasons varied, but centered on living conditions and abuse of power and position by senior officials. "Military courts handed down over 40,000 verdicts in the first 10 months of this year ... and a similar number of cases were resolved before reaching court." This is noteworthy from two aspects. First, there is a system for military justice in place, and apparently working to some degree Second, the number of cases going before the courts points out the difficulties
facing Russia's military personnel today. (ITAR-TASS, 0629 GMT, 8 Dec 98; FBIS-SOV-98-342)

**Hot times under the old town tonight**

Many of us have this problem these days: Just what should we do with many of the left-over relics from the Cold War? Enterprising Americans have bought abandoned ICBM silos and converted them to large, if viewless, underground homes. In Sevastopol, two answers are a swimming pool and a nightclub. NTV reported on the formerly secret underground town Sevastopol-2, which was a vast tunnel-connected construction right under the town proper, built in case of nuclear war. Since the collapse of the Soviet Union, the whole system has fallen into disrepair, with little security to prevent plunder. Sevastopol city authorities now are in charge of the underground doppelganger and are looking to make some money from what remains. Already one bomb shelter has been turned into a nightclub, with former submarine channels being considered for a swimming pool or aquatic park. Maybe we can consider this the 21st-century version of turning swords into plowshares. (NTV, 0900 GMT, 19 Dec 98; FBIS-SOV-98-353)

**Of ships and missiles**

There has been talk for quite awhile that the Russian aircraft carrier the Admiral Gorshkov would be sold to India. That still hasn't happened, but it appears likely. Recently Tass mentioned the ship in an article describing a potent weapon system that is "expected" to arm the vessel. (ITAR-TASS, 0933 GMT, 21 Dec 98; FBIS-SOV-98-355) The weapon is the Yakhont, a surface-to-surface anti-ship missile with an advertised range of up to 300km. The Mach 2 plus missile can fly a variety of profiles, but all end up with the missile homing in on its intended target just meters above sea level. This makes it extremely difficult for self-defense weapons systems to find, engage, and destroy the Yakhont before the missile hits the intended ship. The Russians are quite proud of the Yakhont, as the Tass press release makes clear.
As to the Admiral Gorshkov, no further details were given regarding the status of the hoped-for sale; the issue is to "be decided at Russian-Indian inter-governmental talks." The Admiral Gorshkov is the fourth and last of the Soviet Union's Kiev-class aircraft carriers. These ships were designed with conventional cruiser bows and angled flight decks for short take-off and vertical landing (STOVL) aircraft and helicopters. The ship has been redesigned with a full carrier deck, incorporating a "ski-ramp" bow to launch conventional fixed-wing aircraft.

**Spies among us**

It's not just high-ranking military officers and members of the Duma who are worried about external threats to Russia. A couple of news releases in December reported on spying by unnamed western services. Tass quoted the military intelligence chief of the Leningrad military district who spoke of intelligence gathering efforts by NATO and Baltic country agents. The closing quote from the good general is telling and worth repeating here: "We are aware of all the aspects of these activities, from espionage to exploring the opportunities offered by the increased freedom of the press." (ITAR-TASS, 1256 GMT, 19 Dec 98; FBIS-SOV-98-353) We'd like to see the general's definition of spying, and isn't freedom of the press a burdensome thing with which to deal?

Interfax wrote a short article on a television address given by the director of the Federal Security Service (FSB), Vladimir Putin. Putin warned of crime, corruption, terrorist acts, and other "internal and external threats to Russia's security." (Interfax, 0800 GMT, 20 Dec 98; FBIS-SOV-98-354) Western "special services" were mentioned as trying to obtain information on weapons developments and combat readiness, particularly Russia's "nuclear deterrence component." That sounds pretty much on the spot -- most of us outside Russia would like to know more on these topics. Unstated is the same topic just mentioned: What constitutes spying, and what constitutes legitimate (and legal) fact finding? What Mr. Putin and his cohorts may not recognize are the quite real
concerns worldwide over questions on the status of the former USSR's nuclear arsenal: who's in charge of all the systems; is the technology being sold, and if so, to whom; is all the nuclear material accounted for; and that's just for starters. Also, the effects of nuclear contamination from the Russian fleet are of more than passing interest to neighbors such as Norway. So yes, Mr. Putin, you are probably correct in your assessment of western powers gathering information within your country. Welcome to the new world order.

Newly Independent States: CIS

By Sarah Miller

CIS collective security lacks collective funds
As the CIS Collective Security Treaty nears the end of its first five years, Russian Defense Minister Igor Sergeev has begun a vigorous campaign to extend its lifespan. (ITAR-TASS, 1327 GMT, 2 Dec 98; FBIS-SOV-98-336) Sergeev also has called for further defense cooperation, specifically the implementation of a military cooperation program until 2001 and the appointment of a new peacekeeping commander in Abkhazia. (Interfax, 0908 GMT, 21 Dec 98; FBIS-SOV-98-356) However, CIS military cooperation is thwarted by a severe lack of funding. A meeting of the CIS Council of Ministers of Defense revealed that the CIS member states owe more than 34 billion rubles (R) for 1994-98. In past years, Russia has made up the difference, but this year has only been able to contribute R6.4 billion toward the R12.25 billion shortfall. (ITAR-TASS, 1046 GMT, 21 Dec 98; FBIS-SOV-98-355)

We're just keeping an eye on our own backyard!
Russian Foreign Minister Igor Ivanov recently denied Russia's hegemonic interests in the conflicts of CIS member states, saying that the resolution of conflicts "conforms to Russia's strategic interests." The comment specifically addressed Azerbaijan's concerns about Russian arms sales to Armenia. Ivanov
further responded that while Nagorno-Karabakh is a complicated situation, "[Russia] is ready to provide comprehensive assistance," and that relations with Armenia "should continue developing." (Interfax, 1435 GMT, 28 Dec 98; FBIS-SOV-98-362) However, a recent CIS Council of the Border Troops Commanders indicated that Russia's desire to secure its strategic interests within the former borders remains. Despite Georgia's attempt to force a vote "on manifestations of separatism as a development that destroys the territorial integrity of the state and the unity of its state border...," the issue was not adopted by the council. To the contrary, the director of the Russian Border Guard Service acerbically replied, "unlike my Georgian counterpart, I believe that there are internal and external borders in the CIS and that they should be treated in a different way." The Georgian government is most concerned with Russia's self-proclaimed "outward haulage of agricultural products...from and the import of a certain quantity of food to Abkhazia." (ITAR-TASS, 1631 GMT, 3 Dec 98; FBIS-SOV-98-338)

Money, money, money
The IMF and World Bank announced that they would provide $200 million in financial aid to CIS countries affected by the recent crisis in Russia. The money has been specifically earmarked for Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Kyrgyzstan, Moldova and Tajikistan since "the crisis in Russia threatens an upset in economic stability in these countries." (Interfax, 0818 GMT, 24 Dec 98; FBIS-SOV-98-358)

Free trade progresses
The draft protocol on changing and enlarging the 15 April 1994 agreement on the creation of a free trade zone was finalized and approved at a December meeting of the working group of the CIS Interstate Economic Committee. The draft, which was accepted by delegates from each CIS state, has been submitted for approval to all member states. Following approval, a finalized version will be submitted to the Council of CIS Heads of State. The draft protocol was accompanied by a Ukrainian request to insert an article that excludes indirect taxation of goods and services exported between free trade areas. Although this
initiative was supported by all but Russia, the Russian proposal to include the issue of indirect taxes in a separate agreement was ultimately accepted. (Interfax, 1705 GMT, 30 Dec 98; FBIS-SOV-98-364)

Newly Independent States: Caucasus
By Miriam Lanskoy

AZERBAIJAN

Stress and strain in relations with Iran
The Azerbaijani legislature, the Milli Majles, approved three accords with Iran in early December. The agreements pertain to the extradition of criminals, the transfer of prisoners, and collaboration in the legal and judicial sphere. According to estimates, roughly 100 Iranians are held prisoner in Azerbaijan. (IRNA, 2226 GMT, 3 Dec 98; FBIS-SOV-98-337) Several Azeri opposition parties condemned the treaties' ratification on the grounds that they would be used to extradite ethnic Azeri dissidents who had fled from Iran. Their fears proved well-grounded when, in early January, Iran requested the extradition of Mohammedali Galibi, an Iranian citizen who led the National Liberation Movement of Southern Azerbaijan (located in Northern Iran) until he immigrated to Azerbaijan in 1997. Galibi is resisting the extradition and claiming that he would be executed in Iran. (Turan, 1630 GMT, 5 Jan 99; FBIS-SOV-99-006)

Caspian Sea demarcation still incomplete
In 1998 several meetings were held between Azeri and Turkmen experts to define the extent of each state's Caspian Sea sector with respect to the other state. Although by participating in the negotiations Turkmenistan endorses the principal of sectoral division of the sea, the difficulty of defining the precise boundary has proven quite formidable. Turkmenistan and Azerbaijan both claim the Kyapaz, Azeri and Chirag deposits. The last series of negotiations ended in
early December without any resolution. (Turan, 1000 GMT, 9 Dec 98; FBIS-SOV-98-344)

The lack of clear demarcation provided fertile ground for a similar disagreement with Iran. The Azerbaijani foreign ministry has protested against prospective geophysical studies to be carried out by Iran and the oil companies Shell and Lazno in what Azerbaijan regards as its sector of the Caspian Sea. (Interfax, 1557 GMT, 10 Dec 98; FBIS-SOV-98-344)

**Azeris protest Russian military aid to Armenia**

Russian deliveries of military aid have only intensified since the scandal in early 1997 when it was revealed that Russia has transferred weapons worth more than $1 billion to Armenia since 1994. In the last two years Armenia took possession of zenith missile complexes (including the S-300 missiles), five MiG-29 fighter planes, and many other weapons.

This information was revealed by Azerbaijani State Foreign Policy Adviser Vafa Guluzade, who sees the Russian arming of Armenia as an element of the former's imperial and anti-Turk policy which manifested itself in Russian support for the Armenian side in the war over Nagorno-Karabakh. Guluzade described an OSCE-sponsored meeting in 1993 where the Armenian representative told participants that the Armenians only meant to occupy Nagorno-Karabakh and the Russians came up with the idea of occupying the additional areas adjacent to the disputed region. Shortly after this meeting, Guluzade was summoned to Moscow by Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Anatoli Adamishin who tried to convince him to allow a Russian military presence in the adjacent Armenian-occupied area called Kelbadzhar. (Zerkalo, 26 Dec 98, pp. 10, 11; FBIS-SOV-98-364)

The Azerbaijani defense minister, Safar Abiev, complained to Turkey's representatives about the Russian military transfers to Armenia and called on
Turkey to expand its military support of Azerbaijan. (Turan, 1200 GMT, 29 Dec 98; FBIS-SOV-362)

GEORGIA
Trading border guards for bases?
Since early last fall Georgia has been reclaiming control over sections of its border. The coastal checkpoints have already been transferred from Russia to Georgia and the land portion of the frontier is due to follow by July 1999. (See interview with President Eduard Shevardnadze, Radio Tbilisi Network, 0600 GMT, 21 Dec 98; FBIS-SOV-98-355) This important achievement may have come at a very high cost. As Liz Fuller surmises, Russia's willingness to return control over the border to the Georgians may be in return for a promise to abandon efforts to evict the Russian bases from Georgia. "During talks with senior Russian officials in Moscow later in November, Georgian Minister of State Vazha Lortkipanidze reportedly agreed that the Russian military bases in Georgia should not be closed ... as they constitute a 'stabilizing factor' in the Caucasus."
(RFE/RL Newsline, 8 Jan 99)

Georgian Communists celebrate Stalin's anniversary
Roughly a thousand people gathered to commemorate the 119th anniversary of Joseph Stalin's birth in the village of Gori. Panteleimon Georgadze, the leader of the Georgian Communist Party, addressed the gathering and lamented that "Stalin's cause has been betrayed" and that no leader capable of reuniting the Soviet Union has emerged. (Interfax, 1336 GMT, 21 Dec 98; FBIS-SOV-98-355)

Newly Independent States: Central Asia
By Monika Shepherd

KAZAKHSTAN
Campaign violations cited by OSCE and two presidential candidates
After expressing its disapproval of the Kazakh parliament's decision to hold early presidential elections in January 1999, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) decided to send only a 15-member observer team to assess the election process, instead of an actual monitoring team, which would require at least 200 personnel. According to Judy Thompson, coordinator of the Kazakh mission of the OSCE's Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights, reliable reports of the use of coercion to obtain voter signatures during the registration period for presidential candidates, the fact that two candidates were barred from running at all, and the extreme brevity of the campaign period itself caused the OSCE to harbor grave doubts about the fairness of the entire election process. (Interfax, 1409 GMT, 24 Dec 98; FBIS-SOV-98-358)

Two of the four presidential candidates -- Gani Kasymov (chairman of Kazakhstan's Customs Committee) and Serikbolsyn Abildin (the Kazakh Communist Party candidate) -- have also publicly complained about authorities' interference in their election campaigns. Both candidates cited local officials' refusal to provide them with facilities to meet with their supporters, and Kasymov also mentioned that his posters and leaflets had been torn down, and that the press would not publish his election program. (Interfax, 1041 GMT, 25 Dec 98; FBIS-SOV-98-359, and Interfax, 1645 GMT, 23 Dec 98; FBIS-SOV-98-)

**Kazakhstan planning to build its own fleet of oil tankers**

The Kazakh government plans to construct its own fleet of oil tankers to carry petroleum from its Caspian wells to the world market via the Volga River, the Volga-Don Channel, the Black Sea, the Bosporus Straits, and the Mediterranean Sea. Some ships will be purchased from abroad and some will be built at Kazakhstan's Zenith defense plant in Ural'sk, near the Russian border. The government plans to allocate US$94 million for the establishment of the oil tanker fleet. (Interfax, 1727 GMT, 26 Dec 98; FBIS-SOV-98-360)
KYRGYZSTAN

New government installed by President Akaev

On 23 December, President Akaev submitted a proposal to the Security Council that Prime Minister Jumaliev's government should be dismissed, based on the fact that the present government had not taken effective steps to resolve Kyrgyzstan's financial crisis. The prime minister and the National Bank chairman, Marat Sultanov, were also in attendance at the Security Council meeting, where they had presented a report on the country's economy. President Akaev rebuked both of them for not working together to coordinate a program for the alleviation of Kyrgyzstan's economic problems and blamed their inaction for the som's drastic fall in value. The vote in support of President Akaev's proposal was unanimous, with one abstention. (Kyrgyz Radio First Program Network, 1000 GMT, 23 Dec 98; FBIS-SOV-98-360)

President Akaev signed a decree appointing Jumabek Ibraimov to the post of prime minister two days after the Security Council meeting; the parliament approved his appointment the same day. (Kyrgyz Radio First Program Network, 1400 GMT, 25 Dec 98; FBIS-SOV-98-359, and ITAR-TASS World Service, 1035 GMT, 25 Dec 98; FBIS-SOV-98-359) The new prime minister had been chairman of the Property Fund since 1997, and prior to that he held a number of different posts, including those of: presidential administration chief, presidential adviser, and the president's representative in parliament. Ibraimov also served as the chief of the Bishkek city administration and as the director of a Bishkek automobile assembly plant, prior to entering the president's service. (Interfax, 1333 GMT, 25 Dec 98; FBIS-SOV-98-359)

Shortly after Ibraimov's appointment as Kyrgyzstan's new prime minister, the presidential press secretary, Kanybek Imanaliev, announced that President Akaev was in the process of drafting a decree which would bestow greater authority upon the prime minister, in order to enhance his ability to resolve the country's economic crisis. These additional powers will most likely include the
right to appoint regional, city and district administration chiefs, as well as the right to appoint and dismiss ministers and department chairmen. Previously, only the president could order these officials' appointments and dismissals. (Interfax, 1042 GMT, 28 Dec 98; FBIS-SOV-98-362)

Comment
Whatever the reasons were for Kanybek Jumaliev's dismissal, it would seem that he did not consult President Akaev as much as the latter would have liked. Ibraimov, on the other hand, has already pledged that should he encounter any obstacles to his plans for Kyrgyzstan's economic recovery, he will request both presidential and parliamentary assistance. It is not clear whether this promise was meant as an assurance to the president or as a threat to his opponents -- perhaps it should be considered as both.

Anti-corruption campaign to rescue the economy and reduce crime?
In the weeks preceding the prime minister's dismissal, an anti-corruption campaign launched by President Akaev's administration felled a number of high-ranking government officials. The president accepted the resignation of his administration chief, Omar Sultanov, on 9 December, presumably for engaging in "intrigues and politicking." (Kabar, 0910 GMT, 10 Dec 98; FBIS-SOV-98-344) A few days later, police arrested the deputy ministers of finance, industry, and ecology, as well as the chiefs of various branches of the agriculture and finance ministries. The arrested officials were charged with counts of corruption and abuse of office. (ITAR-TASS World Service, 0956 GMT, 14 Dec 98; FBIS-SOV-98-348)

According to Kyrgyzstan's Prosecutor General Asanbek Shirshenaliev, 383 government officials have lost their posts since 1993 due to corruption allegations against them. He stated that the latest wave of arrests was the culmination of a year-long investigation. He also announced that the newly created Coordinating Council Against Corruption and Economic Crime, which
was established by President Akaev on 19 December, had begun setting up telephone hotlines to receive Kyrgyz citizens' complaints about corrupt officials. (Interfax, 1348 GMT, 21 Dec 98; FBIS-SOV-98-355)

Prime Minister Ibraimov has pledged to make the fight against corruption one of his government's primary objectives, in concomitance with ending Kyrgyzstan's current economic crisis. In fact, he hopes to resolve the country's financial problems at least partially by cracking down on such crimes as smuggling and tax evasion and by abolishing some of the privileges which many government officials enjoy. (ITAR-TASS World Service, 1304 GMT, 25 Dec 98; FBIS-SOV-98-359) During his first news conference as Kyrgyzstan's prime minister, Mr. Ibraimov also announced that he intended to work to make the government's dealings more "transparent," including the possible open publication of how much tax revenue is collected, from whom the taxes are collected, and what the tax money is used for. (Kyrgyz Radio First Program Network, 1400 GMT, 25 Dec 98; FBIS-SOV-98-360)

TAJIKISTAN

UTO commanders battle in downtown Dushanbe

Two United Tajik Opposition (UTO) commanders who had been called to Dushanbe for a conference with the opposition's top leadership became involved in an hour-long firefight on 30 December in the city's center. A group of Field Commander Ali Pirmuhammadov's supporters ambushed a number of Field Commander Rahmon Sanginov's men with fire from automatic weapons and grenade launchers as the latter exited the offices of the National Reconciliation Commission. A violent altercation on the outskirts of Dushanbe several days beforehand, during which two of Sanginov's supporters were killed, is thought to be the cause of the incident in Dushanbe. Police sealed off the area surrounding the shootout, but otherwise did not attempt to interfere. Two opposition members were killed and three civilians were injured during the brief battle (Voice of the
Islamic Republic of Iran, 1600 GMT, 25 Dec 98; FBIS-SOV-98-359, and ITAR-TASS, 0931 GMT, 30 Dec 98; FBIS-SOV-98-364).

On 31 December the UTO leadership released a statement announcing that Rahmon Sanginov and Ali Pirmuhammadov had been relieved of their commands by order of UTO chairman Said Abdullo Nuri, and that their supporters should surrender their arms immediately, or face criminal proceedings. Those who voluntarily gave up their weapons would be amnestied. (ITAR-TASS World Service, 1045 GMT, 31 Dec 98; FBIS-SOV-98-365)

Comment
Rahmon Sanginov has been a thorn in the side of the UTO leadership for over a year now, often refusing to obey the orders of the top command, and using his forces to rob and terrorize local civilians. He and his supporters have also clashed with other UTO field commanders more than once, as well as attacking government armed forces and police. Sanginov has proven to be a renegade commander, whose principal concern appears to be self-aggrandizement; unfortunately, there are a number of others much like him. Until the UTO leaders find a way of neutralizing these commanders and ensuring that all of their supporters obey orders handed down from the top, it is unlikely that President Rahmonov's administration will be much inclined to fulfill all the terms of the peace agreement's political protocol.

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