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PRESIDENT

Yel'tsin returns for a memoir moment

Former President Boris Yel'tsin emerged from the quiet seclusion of his retirement to promote his latest memoir, Midnight Diaries. Among the revelations published thus far, Yel'tsin describes the secrecy surrounding his decision to resign last New Year's Eve. Claiming that even his wife Naina was not aware of the decision until just hours before his televised announcement, Yel'tsin writes that it took several conversations with Vladimir Putin before the current president was persuaded to take up the post. Putin had "the doubts of a strong person."

(NEWSWEEK BOOK EXCERPT from PRNewswire, 8 Oct 00; via Johnson's Russia List) Keeping the resignation a surprise was clearly a calculated maneuver. In Yel'tsin's view his ability to spring unexpected decisions on the public had been a useful tool: "[S]uch political moves have always helped me..., sometimes even when it seemed hopeless."

According to Yel'tsin, during the earlier decision to appoint Putin prime minister in August 1999, Unified Energy Systems (UES) chief and close presidential adviser, Anatoli Chubais, argued against Putin's nomination. Apparently he even attempted to convince Putin not to accept Yel'tsin's decision. It is unclear from reports just who informed the president of Chubais' opposition and his efforts to scuttle the president's selection of Putin.

Yel'tsin also agreed to an interview with Mike Wallace on 60 Minutes (8 Oct 00, CBS Network) to publicize his new book. Wallace highlighted the former president's apparent disconnect from reality through his views on Russia's place
in the world, since Yeltsin believes Russia has as much or more influence than the United States. More disturbing, however, was Yeltsin's response to Wallace's recitation of the harsh conditions facing the Russian population, with its diminished standard of living: "Your data are wrong," Yeltsin glared. "I don't believe your data."

**Putin makes a gesture, but is it empty?**

On 18 September, President Putin attended the opening ceremony of the Beis Menahem Jewish community center in Moscow. In a widely publicized address to the public, Putin praised the "upsurge" in the Jewish community as an "integral part of the general revival of folk traditions and spiritual values in Russia."

(INTERFAX, 1658 GMT, 18 Sep 00; FBIS-SOV-2000-0918, via World News Connection)

The president's high profile visit and remarks were seen as an attempt to reassure Russia's Jewish population that the state's attacks on Vladimir Gusinsky were strictly for his business dealings rather than his faith or leadership in the Jewish community. A recent article by the Kremlin's head of the Information and Analytical Agency casts doubts on that goal, however. Writing in Nezavisimaya gazeta, the Kremlin analyst addresses the subject of national security in the era of globalization and the danger of a "world government" created by a "small elite." "The triumph of power in the World government by a Hasidic-paramasonic [sic] group demands urgent correction," the presidential apparatchik states. (The writer is unidentified in the news item: "Power Play" by Yevgenia Albats in THE MOSCOW TIMES, 5 Oct 00; via lexis nexis)

President Putin clearly needs to clarify to the Russian population just what his administration's view is on relations with the Jewish community.

**GOVERNMENT**

**Tentative campaign against Chubais**
There seems to be an attempt to challenge the powerful position of UES Chief Anatoli Chubais. Recent weeks have seen rolling power outages, perhaps provocative, that resulted in harsh criticism of Chubais. On 21 September, the Moscow division of the federal tax police announced it had instituted criminal proceedings against UES for nonpayment of taxes. (ITAR-TASS, 1003 GMT, 21 Sep 00; FBIS-SOV-2000-0921, via World News Connection) Later the same day, the investigation was said to have been dropped. Dmitri Zhurba, financial director for UES, commented that the company had been informed of an investigation on 28 August. UES soon paid the amount in question to the state and believed the matter closed. (INTERFAX, 1412 GMT, 21 Sep 00; FBIS-SOV-20000921, via World News Connection)

Zhurba seemed puzzled that the police would choose to publicize the investigation nearly a month after the fact, but was reassured that the case would be closed. It seems likely that the announcement was politically motivated, however: Chubais has both friends and enemies in the current administration. Time will tell which faction wins out.

Russian Federation: Security Services

By Luba Schwartzman

Collective security & the Taliban
The Collective Security Council (CSC) met, for the first time, on 28-29 September to discuss security challenges to the signatories of the Collective Security Treaty (CST): Armenia, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Russia and Tajikistan. Of particular concern were Taliban forces engaged in combat with the anti-Taliban coalition about five or ten kilometers away from the Tajik-Afghan border and a large number of Afghan refugees at the border (estimated as high as 130,000 persons, though other sources indicate that there is "no massive concentration" of refugees along the border, but rather only a few small groups of civilians from
nearby Afghan villages who are making no attempts to cross the border). (ITAR-TASS, 0805 GMT, 3 Oct 00; FBIS-SOV-2000-1003, and INTERFAX, 1329 GMT, 29 Sep 00; FBIS-SOV-2000-0929, via World News Connection) At that point Russian border guards and reserve troops had been placed on alert and were believed to "have reliably sealed off the Tajik-Afghan border, and especially the Panj and Moskva sectors." (ITAR-TASS, 1307 GMT, 27 Sep 00; FBIS-SOV-2000-0927, via World News Connection)

Russian border guard commander Alexander Markin assured the press that even in the unlikely event that the Taliban forces challenged the border, "the Russian border guards... are strong enough to curb armed provocations." In addition, he declared that if the Afghan refugees gathered nearby attempted to cross the border in large groups, there were "ample means to maintain a normal regime on the border." (INTERFAX, 0626 GMT, 28 Sep 00; FBIS-SOV-2000-0928, via World News Connection)

On 7 October, however, the border guards themselves admitted that, without the backup of the 201st Motor Rifle Division, they would not be able to withstand a Taliban offensive for more than an hour. (RUSSIAN PUBLIC TV, 1700 GMT 7 Oct 00; BBC Summary of World Broadcasts, via lexis-nexis) The situation is so acute that the Russian border guards are authorized to allow Ahmad Shah Masud's anti-Taliban units into Tajikistan, given the consent of political authorities in Tajikistan, if this is necessary for strategic considerations. (INTERFAX, 0742 GMT, 5 Oct 00; BBC Summary of World Broadcasts, via lexis-nexis)

The 'dual-use' trap...
On 3 October, the Primorye territory department of the Federal Security Service (FSB) charged yet another scientist, Professor Vladimir Shchurov, with divulging state secrets and illegal export of military technologies from Russia. Shchurov is head of the acoustic noises lab at the Pacific Oceanological Institute of the Far Eastern branch of the Russian Academy of Sciences. The process began over a
year ago, when acoustic modules were confiscated en route to a Chinese engineering university; the laboratories were sealed, and some documents confiscated. (INTERFAX, 5 Oct 00; via lexis-nexis) Despite his assertions that the sale was approved by the FSB and by the customs officials, Shchurov has been placed under house arrest; if found guilty, he will face up to 30 years in jail. (AGENCE FRANCE PRESSE, 5 Oct 00; via lexis-nexis)

...and other judicial machinations
Andrei Babitsky has been found guilty of using forged documents and fined 100 minimum wages (about $300), but was acquitted under an amnesty. The eased sentence does not, however, satisfy the Radio Liberty reporter and his lawyers, and they plan to file appeals. (INTERFAX, 6 Oct 00; via lexis-nexis)

The tax police to gain prestige, power...
Even though a tax ministry already exists, the tax police is seeking ministry status as a more powerful and comprehensive financial police. The director of the legal department of the Federal Tax Police Service, Leonid Kuznetsov, has announced that the bill on the Fiscal Police has been prepared and been submitted to the proper federal agencies, which have replied positively. Vladimir Beketov, the PR director of the tax police, explained that by cutting the number of organizations in Russia which inspect financial and production activities of enterprises from 30 to 10, "this measure will positively influence the performance of the country’s economy." (IZVESTIA, 6 Oct 00; via lexis-nexis) Alexander Pikaev of the Moscow Carnegie Center disagrees: He declared that "other power agencies will be upset if tax police acquire this status. I think they should strictly divide the powers of all these agencies before deciding to set up another ministry." (THE MOSCOW TIMES, 6 Oct 00; via lexis-nexis)

...and pupils
The Third Moscow Cadet Corps of Tax Police school was set up last month to train "the next generation of the elite tax corps." The children (142, including 20
girls, between the ages of 11 and 16) are taught to appreciate the societal necessity of paying taxes. They are also schooled in armed and hand-to-hand combat. (THE DAILY TELEGRAPH, 6 Oct 00; via lexis-nexis)

Russian Federation: Foreign Relations
By Sarah Miller

Moscow's about-face in Yugoslavia
Last Friday Moscow finally recognized the results of the 24 September Yugoslav elections which catapulted opposition candidate Vojislav Kostunica to the presidency and toppled Slobodan Milosevic. In a statement released by the Kremlin, Russian President Vladimir Putin declared that Russia "has always been with Yugoslavia" and is "prepared to ... extend a helping hand ... to render assistance to the Yugoslav people..." (FEDERAL NEWS SERVICE, 1025 GMT, 6 Oct 00; via lexis-nexis)

After two weeks of diplomatic fumbling and indecisiveness by the Kremlin, the belated recognition came during Russian Foreign Minister Igor Ivanov's visit to Belgrade on 6 October. In an obvious bid to save face with the new Yugoslav president while still protecting the old one, Ivanov met with Kostunica and Milosevic separately. In contradictory statements, Ivanov pledged Moscow's readiness to assist the new democratic Yugoslav government as well as to support Mr. Milosevic's intention to continue his involvement in Yugoslav politics. (ITAR-TASS, 1400 GMT, 6 Oct 00; via lexis-nexis)

Moscow's real interest, however, seems to be preservation of its unique bilateral relations with Yugoslavia regardless of who is president. Until the recent election crisis, Moscow's stance guaranteed it a place in international negotiations concerning the situation in Yugoslavia, since it was seen in the West as the only reliable diplomatic channel to Milosevic. Russia established this role for itself
during the Kosovo conflict with its staunch opposition to the Western bombing campaign. As a result, the Kosovo conflict allowed Moscow to use its relationship with its Serbian Orthodox "brothers" to build up its international prestige. Under the leadership of Vladimir Putin, Russia continued to support autocratic rule in Yugoslavia under Milosevic. However, on Friday, this policy came to an end as Putin was forced by the popular uprising in Yugoslavia to recognize Kostunica as the lawful president. (REUTERS, 6 Oct 00; via RussiaToday.com)

Despite Russia's apparent embrace of the "democratic forces" in Yugoslavia and the cordial meeting between Ivanov and Kostunica, Russia's political indecisiveness may have lost it a measure of goodwill with the new Yugoslav president. Moscow certainly won no favor from Kostunica by maintaining what Kostunica called an "unnecessarily reluctant" policy towards Yugoslavia in the weeks following the election. (REUTERS, 4 Oct 00; via RussiaToday.com)

Kostunica may have a point: As late as 1 October Sergei Ivanov still insisted in an interview with Russian television that Moscow had "no preference" for either candidate. (BBC MONITORING, 1 Oct 00; via lexis-nexis) However, only days later Moscow showed its implicit loyalty to Milosevic when it upheld the Milosevic-controlled Yugoslav Constitutional Court's ruling in favor of a runoff election. (REUTERS, 3 Oct 00; via RussiaToday.com) Kostunica in turn signaled his lack of trust for Moscow's offer to mediate the crisis when he labeled the proposal "too vague" and refused to travel to Moscow.

But it remains to be seen whether or not there will be any longer-term political damage as far as the new Yugoslav leadership is concerned. After all, even though Russian recognition was late, ultimately Serbia's long-time supporter and ally did come through. Moreover, Russia is probably still a less unattractive ally to the nationalist Kostunica than the West. The first sign that this may have begun came when Ivanov, having just returned to Russia, indicated that Moscow would be President Kostunica's first foreign destination. (THE WALL STREET
Although the new Yugoslav administration has yet to confirm this news, Ivanov's remarks signal Russia's hope that Kostunica will forgive and forget Russia's prior indecisive behavior.

Internationally, Moscow's support for Kostunica has been met with enthusiasm. US Secretary of State Madeleine Albright has even called the decision "great news." (BBC WORLD SERVICE, 1710 GMT, 6 Oct 00; via BBC Online) But this enthusiasm will most likely be short-lived, especially in light of Russia's support of Milosevic's immunity from arrest and continued role in Yugoslav politics. This policy will keep Russia at loggerheads with the West, which according to UN war crimes prosecutor Carla del Ponte is already planning to indict Milosevic for "fresh war crimes charges in addition to the charges he already faces for alleged crimes in Kosovo." (BBC WORLD SERVICE, 1720 GMT, 6 Oct 00; via BBC ONLINE)

Controversial atomic energy deal signed despite international restrictions

Amidst the dramatic events in Yugoslavia, it is unsurprising that President Putin's first state visit to India transpired with little fanfare. But the emerging details of the trip suggest that the world should have been paying more attention to the visit after all.

During his visit Putin signed a strategic partnership pact with India which will facilitate Russian arms transfers to India and could trigger further tensions with Pakistan. In the short to medium term, the transfers will include a T-90 tank deal, the aircraft carrier Admiral Gorshkov and an Su-30 aircraft production license. (ASIAN AGE, 5 Oct 00; FBIS-NES-2000-1005, via World News Connection) The sales not only will furnish Russia with needed revenue and help to bolster Russian-Indian relations, but also will provide India with an even greater ability to counter the Pakistani military forces. Any buildup theoretically could threaten the already precarious military balance in South Asia. Both India and Russia made public pledges that these transfers were not directed at any particular third party,
The memorandum is bound to cause international controversy since Russia apparently will supply technology and assistance despite its membership in the Nuclear Suppliers Group (NSG). As a member, Russia pledged in 1992 not to export nuclear technology to countries that had agreed to full-scope International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) safeguards. These safeguards require international monitoring of civilian nuclear programs to prevent diversion of nuclear material for military purposes. In a move foreshadowing the events in India and effectively circumventing Russia's commitment to the NSG, however, on 7 May 2000 President Putin set new conditions for the transfer of atomic technology to countries that had not met these standards. Thus far, neither the NSG nor the IAEA has commented on the Russian-Indian plans.
Putin continues to nibble away at Russian federalism

In an ominous move, President Putin has sent "envoys" to the federal districts to help voters receive "objective and reliable information" about candidates running for regional office. There is absolutely no legal basis for these envoys or their activities, beyond the presidential decree setting up the federal districts.

Putin's latest move to "monitor" regional elections shows how potentially dangerous these federal districts can be. The districts operate outside of constitutional checks, and are wholly dependent upon Putin both for their form and function. He can, and apparently will, use them anyway he wishes, regardless of the fact that such activities seem to violate Russia's constitutional separation of powers. Putin does claim that "No one must be allowed to speculate on relations with the president, the presidential staff or the envoys. We did not and cannot have any special relations." But it is also clear that there are many ways to influence the outcomes of regional elections without outright association with or advocacy of particular candidates. (INTERFAX, 0816 GMT, 28 Sep 00; FBIS-SOV-2000-0928, via World News Connection)

Putin continues to strengthen his control over the regions by subordinating the work of his regional representatives to the federal districts. At the end of September, Putin requested that his regional representatives submit reports to the heads of the federal districts, with an eye toward four topics: the relationship between the president's regional representatives and republican law, the purpose or role of self-government, assisting regional electoral commissions with the upcoming elections, and bringing regional legislation into line with federal law. (ITAR-TASS, 0902 GMT, 28 Sep 00; FBIS-SOV-2000-0928, via World News Connection)

By the end of the year, 34 regions will have had gubernatorial elections. Many will also have held regional parliamentary and/or municipal elections. Putin
seems sure to want to take advantage of the opportunity to make his presence felt.

No one doubts that some of Russia's regions were stretching their federal autonomy a bit at particular points in the past, but Putin's solution of super-constitutional organization may prove to be a tonic more deadly than the disease it was designed to cure. The construction and passage of good law, and its fair and just application, should address the issue how to establish order in the unruly federation -- not attempt a return to the tried and troublesome habit of autocratic rule.

POLITICAL PARTIES

New parties keep popping up; it must be election season in the regions. The Russian Stability Party (RSP) has been established in St. Petersburg, rising out of the ashes of the defunct Interregional Stability Party which had been founded in 1997. Because the party has 61 branches across the federation, it qualifies as a federal party. The head of the party will be Vladimir Sokolov, with Pavel Burov left in charge of day-to-day affairs. (ITAR-TASS, 1514 GMT, 30 Sep 00; FBIS-SOV-2000-0930, via World News Connection)

Although established in July, Duma speaker Gennady Seleznev's political movement, "Russia," is preparing for its first congress where its program will be determined. The idea is that it will be an ally of the Communist Party and will join the People's Patriotic Union of Russia. Seleznev claims that "Russia" will infuse new "freshness" into the Left. (ITAR-TASS, 1229 GMT, 20 Sep 00; FBIS-SOV-2000-0920, via World News Connection)

Three points can be made here: First, the Left, or more specifically the Communist Party, apparently is stale. Second, it is in fact so desiccated that one of its two leaders was unable to "freshen it up" from within and had to create a new movement. Third, if the new movement "Russia" is to be made up of the
same faces that are apparently now so stale, it is hard to see how the Left can be made squeezably soft in the near future even with such an attractively titled movement. Perhaps the communists should follow the options of cooks when faced with a loaf of stale bread: Throw it out, reconstitute it by diluting it, or grind it up and add it to other things.

The all-Russian movement Entrepreneurship Development has also announced that it will transform itself into a federal political party, its leader Ivan Grachev announced in St. Petersburg. The movement already has branches in 60 regions. The general aim of the new party is to include "balanced ideas of both developing entrepreneurship and market relations and consolidating the social constituent of a state policy." (ITAR-TASS, 1546 GMT, 28 Sep 00; FBIS-SOV-2000-0928, via World News Connection)

Admittedly, Russia's post-Soviet political institutions are still in their infancy, which partly explains why single-issue or single-personality parties and movements keep emerging, even while the same politicians call for the construction of a few, strong parties. These micro-parties and movements are often reservoirs for the personal ambitions of particular men, and infrequently women. It is hard to see how the common good is served.

Newly Independent States: Western Region

By Tammy Lynch

UKRAINE

Growing up is hard to do

While watching the throngs of jubilant demonstrators outside the parliament building in Belgrade, it was easy to be swept by emotion. It was also easy to be reminded of the birth of independent Ukraine.
Over a decade ago, Ukraine's own strongman was swept away by the rising tide of "glasnost'" and the country's unique brand of nationalism. Volodymyr Shcherbytskyi's removal signaled a new era of hope and promise. This expectation seemed justified, as, just over two years later, in a spectacular, incredible turn of events, Ukraine grabbed its independence and took charge of its own affairs. For the first time, Ukraine was independent. Or more precisely, Ukraine was a sovereign country.

In reality, facing technological and agricultural industries in ruins, lacking a capital base, largely devoid of an experienced, well-trained elite, challenged by nationality questions, pressured by its "big brother" to the East, left with the aftereffects of Chornobyl, and lacking energy resources, Ukraine was anything but truly independent. Unfortunately, this economic independence still has not arrived. Even more important, an open society based on strong, clear laws and a vigorous civil component has failed to materialize fully. Instead, a complex, confusing, often paradoxical mix of laws, principles and policies has developed in Ukraine. With one hand, it grabs hold of the West, but with the other, it still clings firmly to the old, ingrained Party ways.

During the last month, President Leonid Kuchma diligently courted the IMF and World Bank, touting the progress of his reform-oriented government. This progress is actually considerable. From new more transparent privatization procedures, to the start of agricultural reform, the government is definitely moving toward a more open, Western-style economy. At the same time, however, Kuchma is presiding over a government that has become ruthless toward independent-minded media outlets -- making use of very familiar "persuasion" tactics. From conducting sudden and groundless searches, to following reporters, instituting tax audits and denying access to printing and distribution facilities, the press has been vigilantly targeted by officials.
Not until this month, however, had a journalist previously harassed by the secret police actually disappeared. Heorhiy Honhadze, the editor of the investigative online newspaper Ukrayinska Pravda, simply vanished on his way home from work. Honhadze recently had been investigating corruption among high-ranking officials, and, according to the organization Reporters Sans Frontiers (RSF), "had already been interrogated several times by the police." In a letter to Kuchma, RSF criticized the "worsening of the situation regarding the freedom of the press in Ukraine" and called on Kuchma not only to locate Honhadze but also to "intervene" against the recent attacks on the press. (RSF LETTER, 19 Sep 00)

During his many comments about the reforms of his government, Kuchma has so far avoided any mention of the RSF letter. He has also remained relatively quiet about the fact that his deputy prime minister responsible for the energy ministry, Yulia Timoshenko, is being investigated for possible connection to the money laundering carried out by former Prime Minister Pavlo Lazarenko. Unfortunately this fits in well with the recent finding by the World Bank that the Ukrainian government is massively corrupt, and has been getting worse over the last several years.

On the other hand, as the Honhadze drama played out, Ukraine was taking part in the OSCE mission to Nagorno-Karabakh, successfully hosting NATO "emergency situation" exercises and strengthening its support for GUUAM. Thanks to more efficient administrative procedures, it was also collecting an unprecedented percentage of payments for electricity and taxes, and posting a GDP growth of over 5 percent in the first eight months of the year. All of this led Johannes Wolfensohn, president of the World Bank, to laud the "visible progress in the economy and many positive developments in the budget process, fiscal discipline, and administrative reform." (WORLD BANK GROUP NEWS RELEASE, 6 Oct 00)
Shortly thereafter, Wolfensohn, with the blessing of the IMF, announced a resumption of World Bank loans to Ukraine to support reform of its coal industry. Ukraine soon will receive two tranches totaling $70 million. Wolfensohn also suggested that the country would receive another $100 million for restructuring the financial sector.

There is no doubt that Ukraine has completed much hard work and deserves to have its World Bank loans resumed. There is also no doubt that, in many ways, after almost 10 years of sovereignty, Ukraine fails to meet the very basic standards of modern Western society. This is a lesson that almost certainly will be learned by those demonstrators in Belgrade. An entire society, unfortunately, cannot change with the fall of a dictator -- or an empire. Perhaps, however, the society can transform itself slowly, over time, with prodding support and an abundance of patience. As Wolfensohn noted in Kyiv, in a statement that just as easily could fit Belgrade, "This is a very important moment .... There is a lot to be proud of, although there is still a lot to achieve." (BLOOMBERG, 1213 ET, 6 Oct 00)

BELARUS
Russia to the rescue
Have "democratic principles" and "support for law" won out again in Russia? Seeing that the Belarusian dictator Alyaksandr Lukashenka was becoming increasingly isolated because of the refusal of many Western countries to recognize his upcoming parliamentary elections, Russia has stepped in to the breach. On 29 September, the world-renowned "democrat" Gennady Seleznev (of the Communist Party of the Russian Federation) announced that Russia will send observers to Belarus to monitor the elections and ensure that they are free, fair and democratic! (INTERFAX, 1107 GMT, 29 Sep 00; FBIS-SOV-2000-0929, via World News Connection)
Judging from past performance, Russia's arrival on the scene should be welcomed by international leaders. After all, just two weeks ago, Russian observers of the Yugoslavian elections announced that the process "met all the requirements of international law," and said they "did not hear a single complaint about people ignoring or suppressing anything during the poll." (ITAR-TASS, 1055 GMT, 27 Sep 00; FBIS-SOV-2000-0927, via World News Connection) It is quite possible that these same observers -- technically members of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Union of Belarus and Russia -- will be the persons "observing" in Belarus. So, the international community, which has been increasingly concerned about arrests of opposition members calling for an election boycott, should give a sigh of relief and relax. Obviously, there is nothing to worry about.

Newly Independent States: Central Asia
By Lt. Col. James DeTemple

**Kyrgyzstan-Uzbekistan pact: implications for the Collective Security Treaty**
The recently signed Kyrgyz-Uzbek security pact could undermine Russia's attempts to create a Russian-led Central Asian bloc under the CIS Collective Security Treaty and re-establish itself more solidly in the territory of the post-Soviet republics. The military cooperation agreement, the first of its kind between two Central Asian states, may also indicate that the CIS is considered by some Central Asian members to be an "empty shell" in the defense against "non-traditional" security threats, such as international terrorism and organized crime.

The security accord was signed in Bishkek during Uzbek President Islam Karimov's official visit to Kyrgyzstan. Kyrgyz President Askar Akaev explained that the agreement was precipitated by Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (IMU) strikes from bases in Tajikistan in a mountainous region bordering southern Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan. (INTERFAX, 1039 GMT, 27 Sep 00; FBIS-SOV-
Karimov explained that the UN Security Council should "convene an emergency session" to discuss solutions to Central Asian security problems. The Uzbekistan president added, however, that the Central Asian states should exercise responsibility for their own security and take "concrete steps" to reinforce their armed forces and border guards. (INTERFAX, 1010 GMT, 27 Sep 00; FBIS-SOV-2000-0927, via World News Connection) The Uzbek president's comments may signal displeasure with the way the CIS (i.e., Russia) has handled regional security problems or simply may indicate Uzbekistan's desire for regional hegemony. Nevertheless, the security pact itself is a watershed for Central Asia. While Karimov referred to Russia's strategic designs in the area, he also stated that Russia should align its policies with the interests of the Central Asian states. (INTERFAX, 0702 GMT, 27 Sep 00; FBIS-SOV-2000-0927, via World News Connection) Clearly the states are trying to control the level of assistance their stronger neighbor may provide.

Along with increasing security cooperation among themselves, Central Asian states such as Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan are forging closer ties with NATO and its members (i.e., Turkey and the US) to enhance regional security. The recent exercise of the Central Asian peacekeeping battalion, CENTRASBAT, in Kazakhstan under the NATO Partnership for Peace program, for example, went a long way toward improving military skills and capabilities, as well as increasing military contacts. CENTRASBAT exercises, launched in 1996, enable the Central Asian states to cooperate more closely with NATO peacekeepers and, more importantly, with each other, by testing communications and coordination between national delegations and capitals, as well as crisis response mechanisms. According to US General Henry Shelton, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, these peacekeeping exercises play an important role in bilateral relations and regional security. (ITAR-TASS, 1515 GMT, 13 Sep 00; FBIS-SOV-2000-0913, via World News Connection)
Turkey is also pressing its politico-military, cultural and historical ties with Central Asia. Turkish President Ahmet Necdet will visit Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan, Kyrgyzstan and Kazakhstan between 16 and 20 October, underscoring Ankara’s determination to play a more active role in Central Asian regional security.

(ANATOLIA, 1154 GMT, 29 Sep 00; FBIS-SOV-2000-0929, via World News Connection) A Turkish-Uzbek military-technical agreement could emerge from these talks. Tashkent is already expanding its security cooperation with Ankara by sending Uzbek counter-terrorism units to Turkey for training in mountainous areas and high elevations, places where guerrilla forces are known to operate.

(INTERFAX, 1515 GMT, 18 Sep 00; FBIS-SOV-2000-0918, via World News Connection)

While security relationships with NATO, Turkey and the US, as well as other regional powers like China and Iran, may provide workable alternatives to the CIS, Russia will continue to wield considerable influence in its "near abroad" due to its geopolitical position and links to Central Asia. According to the president of Kyrgyzstan, "Russia, as a great power, could become the main force in the formation of a system of stability and security in Central Asia." (NEZAVISIMAYA GAZETA, 23 Aug 00; via the Current Digest of the Post-Soviet Press) Air defense integration is one of several areas that have been successful within the CIS framework. (CENTRAL ASIA-CAUCASUS ANALYST, 27 Sep 00) With so many contradictions, it may be premature to sound the death-knell of the CIS.

Some Central Asian states still rely heavily on Russia to varying degrees for security and defense. With 10,000 Russian border guards and a motorized division permanently stationed on its territory, Tajikistan depends almost entirely on Russia for border security. Russia recently "hardened" its defensive positions along the border between Tajikistan and Afghanistan in response to IMU incursions into three Central Asian republics and the Taliban offensive in northern Afghanistan. (ITAR-TASS, 1649 GMT, 1 Oct 00; FBIS-SOV-2000-1001, via World News Connection) Russia also has intensified its security cooperation
with the Central Asian states and has reinforced its presence along CIS southern borders within the CIS framework. (ITAR-TASS, 1451 GMT, 26 Sep 00; FBIS-SOV-2000-0926, via World News Connection)

Moscow cites the instability created on the southern borders of the CIS as a deep security concern. Russian President Vladimir Putin asserts that the dangerous situation created on the Tajik-Afghan border and instability in Central Asia as a whole have serious implications for Russian security. According to Putin, destabilization in Central Asia "would likely have a negative effect on the situation in Russia as well," and Russia would prevent the Afghan conflict from "spilling into the former USSR territory." (INTERFAX, 0940 GMT, 30 Sep 00; FBIS-SOV-2000-0930, via World News Connection) The secretary of the Russian Security Council, Sergei Ivanov, said during a meeting in Moscow in late September that security council representatives from CIS member states have discussed the situation on the Tajik-Afghan border, as well as the shaping of forces and defense within the Collective Security Treaty. (ITAR-TASS, 1446 GMT, 29 Sep 00; FBIS-SOV-2000-0929, via World News Connection) Whether the CIS establishes itself as an effective collective security framework in the next few years remains to be seen. Even Russia calls into question the validity of the CIS for use in security matters by continuing to pursue bilateral security relationships with the Central Asian states.

The Kyrgyz-Uzbek security pact is a step in the right direction in that it consolidates regional security, and adds a new dimension to regional cooperation. This "burgeoning" intra-regional security and defense cooperation and potential re-alignment with the West eventually could replace the CIS framework. NATO and the US, however, are maintaining a low profile militarily in Central Asia using NATO's Partnership for Peace program as their primary engagement tool. Russia is likely to continue using the CIS to assert its presence on its southern periphery.
The countries that play together...

A glance at the calendar of events for the last few months alone provides clear indication that, should NATO members decide against inviting the Baltic states to join the alliance in the next round of enlargement, the reason will be total acquiescence to an outdated notion of "spheres of influence," rather than any inability by the Baltics to coordinate with Western military structures.

Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania have joint exercises scheduled with almost everybody in the months of September and October. Most of the exercises focus on training that provides benefits to the Baltics, an important consideration for the countries which are working toward the optimal defense allocation of two percent of the annual budget.

However, while the short-term usefulness offers justification for the exercises in their own right, the long-term benefit -- getting accustomed to working with Western military structures -- is significant. Open Spirit 2000, a week-long minesweeping exercise covering 67 square nautical miles, involved the participation of the Baltic states along with Belgium, Denmark, France, Germany, the Netherlands, Sweden and the United Kingdom. In all, 18 ships representing 11 countries removed some potential explosive dangers in the Baltic Sea. (BNS, 1014 GMT, 18 Sep 00; FBIS-SOV-2000-0918, via World News Connection)

The following week, Baltic troops trained with their counterparts from Canada, the United Kingdom, the Netherlands, Spain, Germany, Norway and Denmark. Under the guidance of the NATO Atlantic Ocean marine unit, participants of the Passex 2000 exercises focused on maneuvering, extending aid to other ships and cargo delivery. (BALTIC NEWS SERVICE DAILY REPORT, 1800 GMT, 20
Such international activities are paying off: Following a meeting in Vilnius with President Valdas Adamkus, David Weisman, the US military representative to NATO, said Lithuania is one of the best-prepared applicants to the alliance. (BALTIC NEWS SERVICE DAILY REPORT, 1600 GMT, 25 Sep 00)

Cooperation training also was the focus of Nordic Peace 2000 from 26 September to 6 October, which featured officers from the Nordic and Baltic countries, as well as representatives from the Danish Human Rights Center, the International Red Cross, the Danish Red Cross, the Swedish Red Cross, and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. The games were designed to improve interaction among military headquarters for international peacekeeping and humanitarian operations. (BALTIC NEWS SERVICE DAILY REPORT, 1300 GMT, 25 Sep 00) At the very least, some of the training must be having the desired effect: 30 volunteers from a Lithuanian motorized infantry brigade have headed to Kosovo, where they will join a battalion of Polish servicemen. This is the first peacekeeping mission of the motorized brigade, and the third deployment of Lithuanian troops to Kosovo. (BALTIC NEWS SERVICE DAILY REPORT, 1700 GMT, 23 Sep 00)

On the bilateral level, Lithuanian and British riflemen have been training together since 23 September. Other Lithuanian troops participated in Baltico 2000, joint war games with Italy. Elsewhere, British instructors traveled to Adazi to train Latvian troops as part of the Partnership for Peace program. Those exercises focused on military leadership principles as well as the British army's basic tactics in fighting armored vehicles. (BALTIC NEWS SERVICE DAILY REPORT, 1000 GMT, 18 Sep 00)

In addition, the deputy defense ministers from Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania concluded military cooperation agreements with Poland for next year which envisage a substantial increase in joint training exercises: 66 events are scheduled with Lithuania; Latvia has 40 planned; and Estonia will hold 17 joint
ventures with Poland. At the press conference, Bogdan Klich, the deputy defense minister for Poland, reiterated his country's support of Baltic aspirations to join NATO. (BALTIC NEWS SERVICE DAILY REPORT, 1000 GMT, 27 Sep 00)

Moreover, in a continued attempt to improve coordination among themselves, Baltic forces also held regional training without the West. Amber Sea 2000, begun on 7 October, is intended to facilitate joint actions in extreme situations and during armed resistance. (BALTIC NEWS SERVICE DAILY REPORT, 1600 GMT, 27 Sep 00) In addition, BALTBAT, the Baltic peacekeeping battalion, held field training exercises, which included evacuations of injured persons with the assistance of helicopters. (LETA, 1338 GMT, 21 Sep 00; FBIS-SOV-2000-0921, via World News Connection)

...Don't have to pay together
While the Baltic countries are eager to show the West that they can work together militarily, on the economic front there was no pretense of parity. Estonia continues to reap the benefits of its early austerity program, with a steadily improving economic situation. Having earned positive reports of its economy (ETA NEWS AGENCY, 1259 GMT, 27 Sep 00; FBIS-SOV-2000-0927, via World News Connection), Estonia may have outgrown the need for the International Monetary Fund (IMF) memoranda. Following a meeting with IMF representative John Odling-Smee, Estonian Finance Minister Siim Kallas explained that Tallinn has not needed to make use of the credit possibilities offered by such memoranda, and other types of financial agreements are being discussed. (ETA NEWS AGENCY, 0855 GMT, 25 Sep 00; FBIS-SOV-2000-0925, via World News Connection)

Lithuania's economic star is also shining, as it attracted several offers of financing at the annual IMF and World Bank meetings in Prague. Senior officials from the finance ministry met with representatives of international banks on the sidelines of the meetings. According to an advisor to the finance minister, several
banks were asking about Lithuania's borrowing needs and touting lower interest rates. (BALTIC NEWS SERVICE DAILY REPORT, 1600 GMT, 26 Sep 00)

Alas, the forecast was not quite so good for Latvia. The World Bank reported that Latvia was unable to meet all of its previously promised undertakings -- such as privatization and institutional reforms -- and would face serious negotiations next year if another loan is sought. (BALTIC NEWS SERVICE DAILY REPORT, 1300 GMT, 26 Sep 00) However, the IMF reported that cooperation with Riga has been successful, and the only problem is Latvia's higher than expected budget deficit. (BALTIC NEWS SERVICE DAILY REPORT, 1800 GMT, 26 Sep 00)

Law and disorder
The judicial systems in Estonia and Lithuania recently have received virtual slaps on the wrists. Two cases pending before the European Court of Human Rights in The Hague have ended unhappily for the states concerned. The court ruled to strike from its list a complaint lodged by a former prisoner against Estonia who had claimed prison authorities regularly opened his correspondence with the president, interior ministry, the European Commission of Human Rights and other international organizations. However, the case was not dismissed for lack of cause: The proceedings were terminated because the Estonian government had reached a settlement earlier with the plaintiff, Vitali Slavgorodski, whereby the government will pay 67,567 kroons (US$3,800) to cover any damage and costs incurred, as well as the plaintiff's income tax obligations. (BALTIC NEWS SERVICE DAILY REPORT, 1800 GMT, 25 Sep 00)

The same court ruled that Lithuania had violated the rights of Henrikas Daktaras by failing to ensure fair court proceedings. Daktaras is serving a 7.5-year sentence for racketeering and perverting the course of justice. He charged that he did not receive a fair trial because the tribunal was neither independent nor impartial, and because he was not presumed innocent until found guilty. The
complete ruling will be made public on 10 October. (BALTIC NEWS SERVICE DAILY REPORT, 1000 GMT, 28 Sep 00)

Defendants are not the only persons railing against the judicial system, either. In a report recently released by the security police in Estonia, the slow pace of the courts is hindering crime fighters. The report charges that the deterrent aspect of criminal prosecution diminishes when the defendant has time to forget the nature and circumstances of the crime, and therefore draws no connection to any penalty imposed; moreover, delayed proceedings cause the press to lose interest in cases, so the preventive effect of punishment upon members of the general public is lost. "It is remarkable that of the 30 criminal cases the security police referred to the courts in 1999, only four have reached a conclusion, and four out of 38 cases handed over in 1996-97 are still without effective court ruling," the report stated. "At the same time, it appears from court practice that hearings in the district or state courts are not the main delay. Generally, proceedings in the lower-level courts take the most time," the report added. (BNS, 1313 GMT, 22 Sep 00; FBIS-SOV-2000-0922, via World News Connection)

LITHUANIA

Election results
Preliminary results from the 8 October parliamentary elections indicate that most Lithuanians were not thrilled with the ruling coalition, a sentiment which should come as no surprise to anyone who followed the reaction to the sale of a portion of the state oil industry to the US-based Williams International last year. The agreement went through over the protests of many politicians, including then-Prime Minister Rolandas Paksas who resigned rather than sign the deal, and has since continued to generate controversy. Indeed, parties in the Social Democratic Coalition, the leading vote-getter in Sunday's elections, had directed much of the opposition to the sale.
The Social Democratic Coalition, led by former President Algirdas Brazauskas, won 51 seats in the 141-seat parliament. The coalition, comprised of the Lithuanian Democratic Labor Party, the Lithuanian Social Democratic Party, the Union of Russians of Lithuania and the New Democracy Party, won 23 seats in single-seat constituencies and 28 seats under proportional representation. The ruling Homeland Union-Lithuanian Conservatives, on the other hand, were issued a resounding defeat, garnering just 9 seats in the new Seimas (one single-seat constituency and eight seats under proportional representation). The Lithuanian Liberal Union won 18 seats each in single-member constituencies and proportional representation, for a total of 36. The New Union-Social Liberals earned 11 seats in single-seat constituencies and 16 seats under proportional representation.

While the four parties/coalitions listed were the only groups to get the minimum number of votes required to obtain seats through proportional representation, other parties did wrangle a few seats in single-seat constituencies: the Lithuanian Farmers' Party obtained 4 seats; Lithuanian Center Union, 2; the Electoral Action of the Lithuanian Poles, 2; and the Lithuanian Christian Democratic Party, 2. Other parties obtained one seat through single-seat constituencies: the Lithuanian Freedom Union; the Moderate Conservative Union; the Lithuanian Christian Democratic Union; the Union of Young Lithuania; the New Nationalists and Political Prisoners; and the Modern Christian Democratic Union. Three seats will go to self-nominated candidates. Official results have to be confirmed by 15 October. (LITHUANIAN RADIO, 1000 GMT, 9 Oct 00; BBC Summary of World Broadcasts, via lexis-nexis)