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Russian Federation: Executive Branch
By Michael Comstock

PRESIDENCY
Recent developments
In mid-November, while President Vladimir Putin was in Brussels, Oslo and Prague, Aleksandr Voloshin, the head of the presidential administration, reportedly took charge in the Kremlin. One might have expected a member of Putin's St. Petersburg group and its FSB allies to be entrusted with such a task. Russian newspapers attributed his eminence to the fact that, during the "Nord-Ost" hostage drama, it was Voloshin, not the usual suspects, who came to Putin's aid, offering advice and assistance. (ZAVTRA, 14 Nov 02; via ISI Emerging Markets Database) Although such a direct service-and-reward relationship may be an oversimplification of the power politics at work inside Putin's inner circle, Voloshin's influence appears to be increasing. Shortly after the crisis Voloshin embarked on an official visit to Ukraine, to pave the way for Leonid Kuchma's upcoming trip to Moscow, and to meet with his Ukrainian counterpart to address bilateral relations. (ITAR-TASS, 30 Nov 02; via ISI Emerging Markets Database)

The former head of Gazprombank, Yuri Lvov, currently is at the center of speculation regarding a potential appointment in Voloshin's presidential administration. While the administration has denied these rumors, reportedly this is a commonly held view in banking circles. (VERSIYA, 11 Nov 02; via ISI Emerging Markets Database)

There are indications that YABLOKO leader Grigory Yavlinsky is also gaining political clout as an unofficial advisor to the president. In the debate on reform of
the Joint Russian Energy Systems and on housing, Yavlinsky apparently played an important role in Putin's decision to proceed with caution. He is gaining influence at the expense of Anatoly Chubais, whose negative remarks regarding the president's electoral prospects have moved him onto the Kremlin's blacklist. (NEZAVISIMAYA GAZETA, 19 Nov 02; via ISI Emerging Markets Database)

Chubais is not alone on that list. Putin rebuked one of his chief economic advisors, Andrey Illarionov, recently, following the latter's violation of a taboo concerning the use of foreign platforms for domestic squabbles. Illarionov made vituperative comments about the Unified Energy System of Russia, a joint stock company, at a recent Boston Investment Forum. This may not mean that Illarionov's career has ended, only that Putin still maintains a tight ship and will allow no deviation from the accepted norms of political discourse. Only two other men have broken this particular rule flagrantly and consistently: Boris Berezovsky and Vladimir Gusinsky. Given this company, it would be foolish of Illarionov to make the same mistake again. (KOMSOMOL'SKAYA PRAVDA, 20 Nov 02; via ISI Emerging Markets Database)

Not unexpectedly, Interior Minister Boris Gryzlov has been moved to the head of Putin's Russian Duma faction, Unity, following a recent party election. This constitutes a further stage in the destruction of Aleksandr Bespalov's political career and a setback for Moscow Mayor Yuri Luzhkov, the aspirants for leadership of the faction. (KOMMERSANT, 21 Nov 02; via ISI Emerging Markets Database) The move is widely recognized as a Kremlin tactic to ensure control over the direction of the upcoming parliamentary elections, and it reflects the president's lack of trust in the current party leadership. (ST. PETERSBURG TIMES, 26 Nov 02; via ISI Emerging Markets Database) Meanwhile, the reformation of Gryzlov's interior ministry (MVD) continues; over the past year the MVD troops reportedly have been reduced by approximately 3,000. (PRIME-TASS, 29 Nov 02; via ISI Emerging Markets Database)
Some interesting reports have surfaced also about a purported assassination attempt on a member of the presidential apparat. Details are sketchy, but Russian media reported that on 26 November three boxes of explosives (40kg) were found by FSB and local authorities in a pipe beneath the Rublyovo-Uspenskoye Highway, commonly called the "Presidential Highway" for its frequent use by Putin's entourage. (EKHO MOSKVIY NEWS, 27 Nov 02; via ISI Emerging Markets Database) The FSB denied that explosives were found. Sergey Devyatov, the Federal Guard Service's chief, has admitted that officials were indeed searching for a bomb on the Rublyovo-Uspenskoye Highway, but concluded that nothing was discovered. Journalists have commented on a correlation between this report and an alleged assassination attempt in Turkmenistan, directed against Turkmenbashi himself, as well as the one-month anniversary of the "Nord-Ost" hostage drama. (IZVESTIA PRESS DIGEST, 28 Nov 02; via ISI Emerging Markets Database)

Russian Federation: Security Services
By Michael Donahue

FSB
So many problems, so little focus
Russia's Federal Security Service (FSB) remains distinctly proactive more than a month after the "successful" resolution of the Moscow theater hostage crisis. It appears, however, that the FSB has chosen to focus on "busy work" rather than substantively addressing the weaknesses exposed by the crisis or real, developing threats looming on the horizon.

Governmental mouthpieces continue to explain away the rationale for the manner in which the theater was stormed and the tactics employed in the sophomoric execution of the FSB's operation. In an interview last month which would have been comical but for the gravity of the subject, the leaders of the Alfa
and Vympel special forces teams that stormed the theater described their preparation for the assault as "thorough," and the operation as "classical" against a tactically professional enemy. (ROSSIYSKAYA GAZETA, 12 Nov 02; FBIS-SOV-2002-1114, via World News Connection) The assault was "classical" in at least one regard -- never before has an assaulting force totally eliminated a defending enemy force of nearly 50 in an urban environment without incurring a single casualty. The gruesome efficiency of the Alpha and Vympel, 50 terrorists killed mostly with well-placed shots to the head, stands in direct contradiction to their claim of the professionalism of their enemy. Indeed, hardly a more inept performing group of armed thugs can be found in the annals of history. In light of all the self-congratulations being exchanged in security service circles these days, it is unlikely that anyone of import will take the appropriate reform measures desperately needed in counter-terror forces tactics, techniques and procedures. Instead the "success" of the Moscow theater siege, like that of the Budennovsk raid seven years ago, is likely to be repeated in the future -- much to the misfortune of hostages everywhere.

Rather than addressing these important deficiencies, the FSB remains bent on fighting unimportant, peripheral battles -- like getting even with Sweden for expelling Russian "diplomats" for industrial espionage and finding ways with which to inflict nuisance distractions on NATO and its new Baltic members over the alleged threats to Kaliningrad's security and sovereignty. (ITAR-TASS, 15 Nov 02; FBIS-SOV-2002-1115, via World News Connection) Allegedly the now-to-be-isolated Russian province of Kaliningrad is greatly threatened by foreign security services, specifically Germany's, and according to director Nikolai Patrushev, the FSB will "employ special services, using special methods" to deal with the threats. Undoubtedly season ticket holders at the Berlin opera are meant to have second thoughts about attending the season opener.

Russian Federation: Foreign Relations
Russia's Iraq policy: Looking out for number one

Russia continues to present its version of the reason for supporting the UN mandate for the resumption of the UNMOVIC (United Nations Monitoring, Verification and Inspection Commission on Iraq) and IAEA (International Atomic Energy Agency) missions. "If, on the one hand, we have Iraq's preparedness to fully cooperate with the UN, and, on the other, the UN officials strictly observe their mandate, it would be quite realistic to reduce the timeframe [of inspections] and move towards the suspension and lifting of the sanctions against Iraq," Deputy Foreign Minister Yuri Fedorov said. (INTERFAX, 15 Nov 02; FBIS-SOV-2002-1115, via World News Connection) Seven Russians are serving as UNMOVIC or IAEA inspectors in Iraq, and another 10 have received training and are included in the reserve list. Some Russian inspectors are civilians and others are military personnel specializing in nuclear, missile, chemical or biological weapons. (INTERFAX, 18 Nov 02; FBIS-SOV-2002-1118, via World News Connection)

Despite Moscow’s often-stated belief that no illegal materials will be found, Russians have been meeting with the Iraqi opposition to prepare for a potential regime change. Hamid al-Bayati, a representative of the opposition Supreme Council for the Islamic Revolution in Iraq (an Iraqi Shia group supported by Iran), said that the Russian ambassador to Tehran visited with the Supreme Council's leader, Ayatollah Mohamad Baqir Al Hakim. "This happened for the first time and this is a good sign signaling that Russia is taking a close look at the 'post-Saddam' future of our country," he said. A Russian foreign ministry source noted that "there have been meetings between Russian diplomats and Iraqi opposition representatives before. Russia is open to the opinions of representatives of various social and political forces, ethnic minorities and religious confessions in Iraq...However, meetings such as the aforementioned one do not mean that Russia is changing its fundamental policy on Iraq. Moscow maintains normal
relations with the Iraqi government," the diplomat said. (INTERFAX, 18 Nov 02; FBIS-SOV-2002-1118, via World News Connection)

A week later, Foreign Minister Igor Ivanov also warned that it would be wrong to draw far-reaching political conclusions from the meeting. "This is not the first case in which someone is trying to make such contacts sensational," he said. "There is nothing exceptional about these contacts." (ITAR-TASS, 25 Nov 02; FBIS-SOV-2002-1125, via World News Connection) The Iraqi regime has not commented on such meetings.

**France: Two Ivanovs and a Chirac**

Foreign Minister Igor Ivanov, following the initial session of the Russian-French Council on Security in Paris on 15 November, stated that, "Russia and France, as two nuclear powers and permanent members of the U.N. Security Council, bear a special responsibility for the provision of security and stability in the world. Being guided by this responsibility and special historical relations between our countries, we have agreed to broaden cooperation in the topical issues of security the international community is tackling." Defense Minister Sergei Ivanov added that "Russia and France have and will continue to work closely towards an Iraqi settlement at all levels, particularly at the presidential level." French President Jacques Chirac also commented on the "special" nature of Franco-Russian relations which, he said, are based on common history and "a dimension of trust." (ITAR-TASS, 15 Nov 02; FBIS-SOV-2002-1115, via World News Connection) The very existence of the Franco-Russian Council seems intended to provide a "counter-pole" to NATO.

**Putin's upcoming China-India tour**

President Putin is visiting China and India. In Beijing, Putin met with Chinese President Jiang Zemin and his successor-designate, Secretary-General of the Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party Hu Jintao, to conclude economic and commercial agreements, both on intergovernmental and
interagency levels. During Putin's visit to India, declarations to reinforce the strategic partnership and to strengthen economic and technological ties between the two countries are to be issued. (INTERFAX, 28 Nov 02; FBIS-SOV-2002-1128, via World News Connection)

**Russo-Jordanian Relations**

Russo-Jordanian high-level talks were held on 26-27 November, including discussions about Iraq. At the conclusion of the meeting, Foreign Minister Igor Ivanov declared that "[b]oth Russia and Jordan believe that stability in the region is possible only on the condition of observing [Resolution 1441] and other resolutions of the UN Security Council." (ITAR-TASS, 26 Nov 02; FBIS-SOV-2002-1126, via World News Connection) Economic ties were on also the agenda. Prior to the meeting, Jordan declared its interest in obtaining Russian business participation in laying an oil pipeline from Iraq. The 750-kilometer-long, $246.5 million pipeline will run from the al-Haditha oil field in northeastern Iraq to the oil refining complex in Zarka, Jordan, 30 kilometers northeast of Amman. The pipeline's first 300-km unit (from Jordan to the border with Iraq) is scheduled to be commissioned in 2004. (ITAR-TASS, 25 Nov 02; FBIS-SOV-2002-1125, via World News Connection)

**Parting shot**

The most acerbic comment that followed the Bush-Putin summit was the Russian president's shot at Saudi Arabia. "[W]e must not forget who finances the terrorists," Putin emphasized. Putin then referred to the fact that 16 of the 19 terrorists who carried out the attack in the USA on 11 September were Saudi citizens. (INTERFAX, 22 Nov 02; FBIS-SOV-2002-1122, via World News Connection)
Start the presses! But be prepared to stop them again
In an interesting detour on the road to his dictatorship of law, on 25 November President Vladimir Putin vetoed the amendments to the Law on the Mass Media that could have been used to derail coverage casting government activities in an unfavorable light. The law, proposed by the pro-presidential Duma faction, Unity, and passed thanks to Unity's numbers, had caused something of an uproar among domestic and international proponents of a free press. (THE NIS OBSERVED, 20 Nov 02)

However, since the domestic protests caused few obstacles to State Duma and Federation Council approval of the amendments, the motivation behind Putin's action is murky. Indeed, only one point is clear: The parliamentary passage of the laws was not accomplished without Putin's approval. So why, then, would the president veto the amendments? Two possibilities come to mind: Either the Russian leader caved to international outrage over the proposed legislation [unlikely, given that the outrage wasn't all that loud - limited to some press associations (ITAR-TASS, 1959 GMT, 21 Nov 02; FBIS-SOV-2002-1121, via World News Connection) - and he hasn't given in to much broader, and louder, international complaints on other topics], or (more likely) he is trying to develop an image as a Great Democratizer faced with a parliament still stuck in the Soviet mentality. The latter option fits with other recent parliamentary activity, including a proposal to raise the minimum vote necessary to obtain seats in the State Duma (through party lists) from the current 5 percent to 12 percent; the uproar generated by that idea calmed quickly in the face of a "compromise" increase to 7 percent. (THE NIS OBSERVED, 30 Oct 02)
In fact, there were some early indications that Putin would not support the amendments, cushioned in a way to give the appearance of three strong branches of government. Ella Pamfilova, who heads the president's commission on human rights, warned Putin not to rubber stamp the legislature's move without hearing the commission's full report. (ITAR-TASS, 1546 GMT, 20 Nov 02; FBIS-SOV-2002-1120, via World News Connection) The president subsequently received a telegram from Russia's Human Rights Ombudsman, Oleg Mironov, who echoed Pamfilova's warnings. (INTERFAX, 1402 GMT, 22 Nov 02; FBIS-SOV-2002-1122, via World News Connection) The notion of Putin rubber stamping parliamentary activities is too laughable to accept.

A further clue to Putin's state of mind was the appearance of government officials - specifically, Media Minister Mikhail Lesin and his deputy, Mikhail Seslavinsky -- at a meeting of media owners at which the latter adopted an appeal to Putin not to sign the amendments into law. In fact, there is some speculation that Seslavinsky was the author of the appeal. (RFE/RL NEWSLINE, 21 Nov 02)

So, is Putin attempting to depict himself as a lone democratizing voice? A few minor obstacles stand in the way of such a self-portrait: First and foremost, Putin did not reject the notion of media censorship. While vetoing the legislation, he contacted both houses and requested that a conciliatory commission be established to work on the wording on the amendments. "The legal proposals ... do not fully reflect the current situation in the struggle against terrorism. Nor do they guarantee the citizens' security in counter-terrorist operations," he said, "The responsibilities of the mass media and its representatives in covering terrorist activities and counter-terrorist operations are not clear enough and the related restrictions are not given in sufficient detail. The liability for violating these restrictions is not specified. ... Moreover, prerequisites may arise for unfounded limitation on a citizen's right to receive information." (INTERFAX, 1921 GMT, 25 Nov 02; FBIS-SOV-2002-1125, via World News Connection)
Additionally, in each case, the party proposing the outlandish ideas has been Unity, also known as "Putin's party." And, lest anyone begin to think that Unity is breaking out on its own and suddenly working against Putin's interests, it should be recalled that the president's own prosecutor-general, Vladimir Ustinov, paved the way for the amendments to the media law by linking increases in extremist activity to inattention on the part of the ministries of justice and the press. Moreover, Lesin further fanned the anti-media debate by announcing that the proposed (and passed) amendments would trump any contracts outlining self-censorship and self-control that media owners and journalists would develop on their own. (THE NIS OBSERVED, 20 Nov 02)

Meanwhile, the citizenry offered mixed messages. While a carefully worded survey taken soon after the "Nord-Ost" terrorist drama indicated support of media censorship specifically in cases of hostage takings, a subsequent poll (following passage of the law on media amendments) showed somewhat less enthusiasm for state control. When 1,500 Russian residents were asked by the Public Opinion Fund, 61 percent of respondents said journalists covered emergencies and crises properly. However, 54 percent said the Russian media needed state censorship, and only 22 percent disagreed. (INTERFAX, 1258 GMT, 21 Nov 02; FBIS-SOV-2002-1121, via World News Connection)

**POLITICAL PARTIES**

**Too many cooks in the kitchen, or too many kitchens?**

Despite government moves to cut down the number of parties in parliament (e.g., the aforementioned raise in the vote barrier for proportional representation seats), more - not fewer - parties are cropping up on the political scene. The momentum continues to be with the splintering of parties into new groups, rather than the merging of old parties into larger coalitions. No government involvement is necessary as opposition parties break up; rather, the cause continues to be the personalities of party leaders. And the only persons getting hurt by this splintering are members of the opposition.
Duma MP Vyacheslav Igrunov was elected chairman of the newly formed Union of People for Education and Science (SLON) party, which he founded after seceding from the YABLOKO party in protest against the policies of YABLOKO leader Grigory Yavlinsky. (ITAR-TASS, 1204 GMT, 16 Nov 02; FBIS-SOV-2002-1116, via World News Connection) About 8,000 persons reportedly have applied for membership in the new party, presumably eroding further YABLOKO's membership.

At the other end of the political spectrum, Gennady Seleznev, who formed his own Rossiya party by seceding from the People's Patriotic Union last month (and severing ties with Communist Party leader Gennady Zyuganov), recently announced plans to create a new coalition of "democratic forces" as a foundation for the Party for the Revival of Russia (PVR), which sprang from Rossiya and will focus on transforming the country into a social welfare state. (ITAR-TASS, 1831 GMT, 16 Nov 02; FBIS-SOV-2002-1116, via World News Connection)

Meanwhile, the strange bedfellows case of Boris Berezovsky and the Communists continues. In mid-November, Moskovsky komsolets reported that the exiled oligarch intended to get his supporters on the Communist Party (KPRF) election list. The KPRF faction in the State Duma immediately denied that any negotiations were taking place. (INTERFAX, 0915 GMT, 16 Nov 02; FBIS-SOV-2002-1116, via World News Connection)

**Russian Federation: Armed Forces**

By Steve Kwast and Dan Rozelle

**Sales to Malaysia and Indonesia hurt the fight against terrorism**

It seems that Moscow now has joined the worldwide fight against terrorism. President Vladimir Putin promised to give the Russian military broad power to act
"in all places where the terrorist, the organizers of these crimes or their ideological or financial sponsors are located." (ASSOCIATED PRESS, 11 Nov 02; via Lexis-Nexis) Russian strategists seem to be missing an important point, however, as they narrowly focus on Chechnya as their closest terrorist threat: Flooding the markets of Malaysia and Indonesia with Russian military hardware, with no strings attached, could put military capability in the hands of a much larger and more dangerous future terrorist faction growing in Southeast Asia. The recent terrorist attack in Bali should be a red flag to tread carefully in that part of the world.

It has been no secret that Russia is pushing Malaysia, Indonesia, Thailand and any other country in that region to buy military goods. The push was initiated back in 1996 but fell short of expectations due to the Asian financial crisis. Russian Foreign Minister Igor Ivanov and Indonesian Minister of Foreign Affairs Hasan Wirayudha recently met to discuss this and other issues. After the meeting, Wirayudha said "Indonesia plans to build up its ties in [the] military industrial [sector] with Russia. Groups from both countries will continue to meet and explore them." (INTERFAX, 1345 GMT, 27 Sep 02; FBIS-SOV-2002-0928, via World News Connection) Bilateral trade with Indonesia reached $203.5 million last year alone. Moscow clearly sees more favorable conditions to start increasing that trade and economic investment in military technical cooperation. (ITAR-TASS, 0655 GMT, 24 Sep 02; FBIS-SOV-2002-0924, via World News Connection)

Moscow also is aggressive with respect to selling military goods to Malaysia. At the October LIMA-2001 aerospace show in Malaysia, the Russian airplane-building corporation MiG pressured Malaysia to buy its latest modifications on a series of fighter aircraft. (VESTNIK VOZDUSHNOGO FLOTA, 30 Oct 02; WPS Defense and Security, via ISI Emerging Markets Database) Additionally, Malaysia is considering a purchase of the Mi-38 Russian helicopter that can be used for both military and civilian purposes. (RIA, 22 Oct 02; BBC Monitoring, via
ISI Emerging Markets Database) A few days after the air show, Malaysian Defense Minister Datuk Seri Najib said, "the armed forces are planning to buy several types of helicopters including the Russian Mi-171." (BERNAMA, Internet Text, 22 Oct 02; FBIS-WEU-2002-1022, via World News Connection)

Russia's efforts to entice Thailand to buy military goods have been very successful as well. In fact, during a visit to Moscow, Prime Minister Thaksin Chinnawat was accompanied by the commanders of the army, navy and air force (an unprecedented array). Russian leaders pressed the Thai delegation to lease two Russian submarines and buy a Russian ground-to-air missile system, among other military hardware. (BANGKOK POST, Internet Version, 22 Oct 02; FBIS-EAS-2002-1022, via World News Connection) These offers are attractive because the price tag is almost half the equivalent US price without the stiff restrictions on usage and proliferation the US would require. Prime Minister Thaksin emerged from the talks saying "Thailand is interested in cooperation with Russia in high technologies, especially in the military field." (INTERFAX, 1515 GMT, 18 Oct 02; FBIS-SOV-2002-1018, via World News Connection)

The markets in Southeast Asia may be lucrative for Moscow to dump its military hardware for cold cash, but the consequences might be high. There are never any strings attached to Russian military sales, and these countries have very porous coastlines and significant links to terrorist groups within their borders. Just a few weeks ago, the UN Security Council released a document linking al-Qaeda to a few ruling parties and non-governmental organizations in Malaysia, including the Barisan Nasional (National Front). (PETALING JAYA MALAYSIAKINI, Internet Text, 5 Nov 02; FBIS-CHI-2002-1106, via World News Connection) Additionally, Jemaah Islamiyah, a group linked to al-Qaeda by the United Nations, has articulated its ambitions to create a pan-Islamic super state across Indonesia, Malaysia, Southern Philippines and Northern Australia. (THE NEW YORK TIMES, 30 Oct 02) Indonesia, with the world's largest population of Muslims, would be fertile ground to headquarter such a movement.
(ASSOCIATED PRESS, 11 Nov 02; via Lexis-Nexis) Rear Admiral Richard Cobbold, director of the Royal United Services Institute (RUSI) in London, said the Bali bombing and terrorist-related activities in Southeast Asia during the past few weeks foreshadowed the shift in "the center of gravity" of al-Qaeda's terrorist campaign to the region. At the head of this effort is Jemaah Islamiyah.

(PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER, Internet Version, 16 Oct 02; FBIS-EAS-2002-1016, via World News Connection) These facts, coupled with the increased relationships between organizations in Southeast Asia and the Middle East, give cause for concern.

Media sources in many of these Southeast Asian countries echo anti-Western sentiment, helping terrorist organizations recruit new members. The recent CIA report of an unmanned US predator drone blowing up a car in Yemen hit the regional media with just that tone: "Taking the law into its own hands, [the United States] acts just like other terrorists ready to take innocent lives. It [is] just an example of how the US arbitrarily used its military power against other people."

(MATICHON, 1107 GMT, 7 Nov 02; FBIS-EAS-2002-1107, via World News Connection) Additionally, when the US Administration asked Indonesian President Megawati Sukarnoputri to refute the media conspiracy theory that the United States was responsible for the Bali attack, she condemned the US as "a superpower that forced the rest of the world to go along with it." There are over 200 known Islamic militant organizations currently operating in Indonesia alone. President Megawati has shown that she lacks the ability, leadership or political cohesion to deal with the threat. (THE NEW YORK TIMES, 25 Nov 02) These factors increase the risk that Russian military hardware flooding the markets could fall into the wrong hands.

It would be wise for Moscow to hold back from its aggressive arms sales strategy to the region and allow some of the anti-terrorist efforts to take hold before it proceeds. For example, after the Bali bombing, leaders of 21 Asia-Pacific nations signed the biggest international counter-terrorism plan ever framed. The plan,
agreed to at the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation summit in Mexico, seeks to introduce new conditions and controls on international travel, commerce, on-line transactions, charity and aid organizations. (THE AGE, 29 Oct 02; via Lexis-Nexis) Additionally, Malaysia is establishing a regional training center to counter terrorism. Foreign Minister Datuk Seri Syed Hamid Albar said the training center would focus on projects aimed at enhancing the capability and capacity of each Asian country to deal with terrorist movements. "Our target (timeframe for establishment) for the regional center is next year." (BERNAMA, Internet Text, 27 Oct 02; FBIS-CHI-2002-1028, via World News Connection) These initiatives could put into place structures and barriers that reduce the risk of weapons falling into the hands of terrorists.

Moscow has historical precedents to guide its arms sales policies in Southeast Asia. After years of flooding East European countries with Russian military capability without proliferation or usage constraints, Russia is finding itself a victim of its own weapons. In the last four months alone, Russia has lost four helicopters and close to 200 lives at the hands of Russian-made surface-to-air missiles. These missiles may have come from Ukraine, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Eastern Europe, or from Arab states via these countries. (MOSKOVSKY KOMSOMOLETS, 12 Nov 02; WPS Defense and Security, via ISI Emerging Markets Database) These avoidable losses point to the counterproductive nature of Moscow's arms sales policies.

If the Russians continue blindly to push military goods into any region, regardless of the potential dangers, they will find themselves in the same situation as Chechnya where they are being targeted by their own weapons. Moscow needs to be responsible with the war-fighting capability it gives to anyone able to pay the price as terrorists get their hands on deadly arms. The international war on terrorism requires Russia to have a broader perspective than just making money through military sales, especially now in Southeast Asia.
ARMS SALES
From Russia (to Ukraine), with love

The latest twist in an increasingly confusing cooperative military relationship came as a Russian defense ministry official announced that Ukrainian air defense forces will take part in a joint live fire exercise on a Russian training range in the summer of 2003. The exercise, called Boyevoye Sodruzhestvo (Combat Commonwealth) 2003, will involve field firing by CIS air defense and air force units and is to be held at Russia's Ashuluk military range this coming August. The announcement comes a year after the same Ukrainian forces inadvertently shot down a Russian Tupolev-154 passenger plane during a national exercise in October 2001. The August 2003 endeavor will constitute the first time that the air defense units will have fired since that tragic mistake.

According to a Russian defense ministry official, Ukrainian forces will use Russian S-300 anti-aircraft systems to fire at aerial targets. The Russians are marketing the S-300 system very actively on the world arms market and this exercise is part of that effort. A Ukrainian military delegation already has met with the Russian manufacturers of the system to discuss upgrading Ukraine's air defense systems with the S-300. In making a case for a proposed sale to Ukraine, the Russian defense official stated that "Unlike its Russian counterpart, the Ukrainian defense industry does not have the necessary mathematical and technical support for such work. In addition there is a shortage of qualified engineers and technicians at Ukrainian defense enterprises." (ITAR-TASS, 1807 GMT, 18 Nov 02; FBIS-SOV-2002-1118, via World News Connection) While this description of Ukraine's defense industry may or may not be accurate, it would seem that the Russian official could use a lesson on how not to insult the customer. Or, perhaps (and more likely) this was a dig at a competing supplier in the arms market.

In fact, this past October it was speculated that Ukraine would sell air defense radar systems to Georgia over the protests of the Russian government. Georgia's
ambassador to Ukraine and Moldova announced the cooperative agreement, saying "Georgia and Ukraine intend to develop their cooperation in the sphere of air defense." Ukrainian officials would neither confirm nor deny any sale. (NEZAVISIMAYA GAZETA, 24 Oct 02; What the Papers Say, via ISI Defense and Security Database) The anti-aircraft system discussed here is no doubt the same sophisticated Kolchuga radar system that allegedly has been sold to Iraq. (THE ST. PETERSBURG TIMES, 18 Oct 02; What the Papers Say, via ISI Defense and Security Database) Installation of this system would improve seriously Georgia's ability to defend itself against Russian bombing raids and undermine Russia's efforts to influence further Georgia's internal affairs.

While the joint air defense exercise may signify a more cordial military relationship between Russia and Ukraine -- the agreement with Georgia notwithstanding -- other issues continue to make relations difficult. At the top is Ukraine's desire to rid itself of Russia's Black Sea fleet now based in Sevastopol. Knowing that having forces from Russia stationed within its territory would hinder, if not kill, Ukraine's proclaimed goal of joining NATO, the Ukrainian government has attempted to hold discussions with Moscow about withdrawal to Russian Black Sea ports. However, Moscow has responded with a firm "no" and referred to the agreement on the location of the fleet in Sevastopol that is in effect until 2017. (NEZAVISIMAYA GAZETA, 11 Nov 02; What the Papers Say, via ISI Defense and Security Database) While Ukraine's hopes to join NATO have dimmed considerably in the last few months, the pursuit to remove the Russian fleet has continued. Perhaps recognizing their predicament and still desiring to shake off Russia's influence, the Ukrainians have resorted to a strategy of subtle harassment. The latest tactic has been to sue and win control of the lighthouses and other hydrographic structures that support the Russian fleet. At present Russia owns all lighthouses on the Crimean peninsula. However, the Russian defense ministry and the Black Sea Fleet only control two bays in Sevastopol, weakening their position in court. (NEZAVISIMAYA GAZETA, 13 Nov 02; What the Papers Say, via ISI Defense and Security Database)
Not to be outdone in the tit-for-tat relations, the Russian Air Force apparently is seeking now to cancel a contract to build a Russian-Ukrainian version of the An-70 military transport plane. The initial agreement was to allocate 164 aircraft to the Russian Air Force and 65 for the Ukrainian Air Force. With Russian financial support for the project's start-up the Ukrainian producer hoped to continue serial production of the aircraft for export to Europe and China. The reasons given by the Russians for discontinuing their involvement in the program included a lack of available funding and a desire to develop an entirely Russian plane. (IZVESTIA, 14 Nov 02; What the Papers Say, via ISI Defense and Security Database)

**Kuchma goes to China**

President Kuchma returned from China on 19 November just prior to the NATO summit. Knowing that he is no longer looked upon favorably in the West and having antagonized Russia with talk of joining NATO, Kuchma most likely is looking for support elsewhere. While in China President Kuchma signed several agreements that will broaden cooperation between Ukraine and the Chinese government and greatly benefit Ukraine.

The most notable agreement with military implications is a protocol on cooperation in aircraft building. (RFE/RL NEWSLINE, 20 Nov 02) Companies from both countries are working together already to build passenger planes in China and modernize other Chinese aircraft. A sale of Ukrainian-built Antonov-140 transport planes to China also is being considered. Prior to President Kuchma's visit, representatives from both countries' defense ministries met at the Air Show 2002 in China to examine other current and planned arms sales to China that may include air defense and naval weapons systems as well as increased military and technical cooperation. (ITAR-TASS, 1408 GMT, 15 Nov 02; FBIS-SOV-2002-1115, via World News Connection)
China also is considering purchasing the cruiser Ukraina. (INTERFAX, 1908 GMT, 15 Nov 02; FBIS-SOV-2002-1115, via World News Connection) Chinese interest in the vessel is curious considering that construction of the ship began in 1984 under a contract with the Soviet Navy yet the ship still is not completed. If/when completed, the ship undoubtedly will be outdated. Though built in Ukraine, the planned missile systems would be Russian. Because of the former Soviet contract and the Russian missile system, Ukraine can sell the ship only in partnership with Russia.

The Kolchuga radar system also may be the centerpiece of the budding relationship between Ukraine and China. China is the second largest buyer of the system after Ethiopia and some arms sales specialists believe that contracts signed with China may have served as a cover for the sale to Iraq. (VREMYA NOVOSTEI, 15 Nov 02; What the Papers Say, via ISI Defense and Security Database) Continued pursuit of military cooperation with China, especially in arms sales, increasingly demonstrates President Kuchma’s political tone deafness. Already under fire from the United States for selling the Kolchuga systems to Iraq and ostracized by NATO at the recent summit gathering for the same reason, he risks further alienation by pursuing arms sales to the Chinese.

Newly Independent States: Western Region

By Nadezda Kinsky and Scott Fleeher

UKRAINE

New guy in town

After President Leonid Kuchma dismissed Prime Minister Kinakh (and his cabinet) on 16 November, the parliament confirmed on 21 November Viktor Yanukovich, his proposed candidate for the position. The 234 deputies of the pro-presidential parliamentary majority (including one Our Ukraine member and one member of Yulia Tymoshenko’s Bloc) voted to confirm the appointment,
while the 210 opposition members abstained. With the defense, interior, justice and foreign ministers retaining their posts in the new cabinet, at this point President Kuchma has confirmed new candidates for most of the other positions in the cabinet. The prime minister cannot be dismissed by government for a grace period of 18 months, providing job security until shortly before the next presidential elections. So, who is this new prime minister of Ukraine, who appeared from relative obscurity to take his post at the head of government within a very short time? What impact might he have on Ukraine?

Yanukovich is a member of the Donetsk clan, not well known even in Ukraine before his appointment less than a month ago. It is assumed currently that he is set to compete for the presidential post in 2004, when his period of immunity as prime minister will be over, and that he is a figure who in that role could ensure a safe and comfortable retirement for Kuchma and prevent power from slipping into the hands of the opposition party leader Viktor Yushchenko. However, Yanukovich categorically denied this idea in his first interview as prime minister. (UKRAINIAN TELEVISION FIRST PROGRAM, 24 Nov 02; BBC Monitoring, via ISI Emerging Markets Database)

Whether or not Yanukovich runs for president, most probably he will undermine Yushchenko's position in the run-up to the presidential elections by further alienating the opposition leader from the eastern oblasts, where his support already is minute. Yanukovich may well push forward language "reform," making Russian a second official language in Ukraine. Such change would deepen the division between the eastern and western oblasts of Ukraine -- the Ukrainian East is primarily Russian speaking. This division between East and West runs much deeper than language, however, and explains in part Yushchenko's failure to raise necessary support in the East. Yulia Tymoshenko could prove helpful to Yushchenko in those areas if the opposition is to fight a unified and successful campaign for the presidential seat against Kuchma and his factions.
Yanukovich further announced that "there will be structural changes in the government but this issue will be discussed after a new [government] team is formed." (UNIAN, 25 Nov 02; BBC Monitoring, via ISI Emerging Markets) Presumably he is referring to restructuring the Rada into a bicameral parliament. This would strengthen regional power: An upper house of governors representing the regions would offset the lower house. Since the governors in Ukraine are appointed and not elected, the development of a bicameral parliament would undermine seriously the democratic process as well as strengthening local clans who hold powerful positions in the regions.

The appointment also elicits memories of the 1996-97 government of Pavlo Lazarenko (who hailed from the better known Dnipropetrovsk clan), raising fears that power in Kyiv now will shift into the hands of another corrupt clan, this time from Donetsk. Although Dnipropetrovsk's economic significance increased in the 1990s due to the clan's machinations (exerting influence over Kyiv with techniques such as strikes) and Lazarenko had proved able to keep in check his group's political ambitions. Now that both clans have representatives filling important positions in the ruling elite, the eastern oblasts carry considerable political weight - undermining the opposition, most significantly Victor Yushchenko. Yushchenko, incidentally, already has criticized the new prime minister for his failure to approve the 2003 budget (as was feared), a situation that is bound to endanger further the already shaky Ukrainian economy.

The West's reaction to the new appointment is not positive. According to Dov Lynch from the EU Institute for Security Studies, "The appointment does not send out a very hopeful message for Ukraine, and it only seems to confirm the marasmus in which the president finds himself domestically and internationally." (RFE/RL POLAND, BELARUS, AND UKRAINE REPORT, 19 Nov 02) Time will show the international repercussions of the cabinet changes in Ukraine, although it appears unlikely that there will be much change in foreign policy - reflected by the fact that Anatoli Zlenko as foreign minister is one of the few persons to have
kept his post in the reshuffle. Yushchenko has voiced his own determination to keep Ukraine on a middle path, recognizing the importance of ties both to Europe (and the West) and to Russia.

Domestically, the new prime minister helps Kuchma in two ways, then - strengthening his position during and after the next presidential election in 2004, while at the same time also undermining Yushchenko's position. While it may seem too early still to be talking meaningfully about the candidates of 2004, the run-up to the elections may well have started in seriousness with this appointment, and one major concern already has been voiced by several, including Yushchenko: the danger of this candidate undermining further the democratic potential of those elections.

Déjà vu?
The director of the Ukrainian News Agency (Ukrayinski Novyny), Mikhailo Kolomiets, reported missing since 28 October, now has been confirmed dead, found hanged in a forest in Belarus.

The course of the investigation since he was reported missing has been marred by controversy. After it was established that Kolomiets had left Ukraine for Belarus, on 29 October the Ukrainian investigators entered his name on the Interpol missing persons list. They then proceeded to continue their search for a man, who - as it later turned out - had been found by Belarus authorities on 30 October. No explanation as to why he was not identified has been given and the Ukrainian investigators were not informed - after 12 days in a Minsk morgue the body was buried as "unidentified." Ukrainian investigators hit upon this, but on 19 November, Belarus authorities first denied that the body was that of the missing journalist. However, the body was exhumed and the corpse was identified by Kolomiets' mother and girlfriend. Claims by the Ukrainian investigators early on that Kolomiets had left Ukraine with the intent of committing suicide, which his mother, friends and colleagues categorically denied, sparked further controversy.
"Everyone who was personally acquainted with Mikhailo Kolomiets refutes the provisional theory of the law-enforcement authorities concerning his suicide," stated Aleksey Petrunya of the newspaper Pravda Ukrainy. (ROSSIYSKAYA GAZETA, 20 Nov 02; FBIS-SOV-2002-1120, via World News Connection)

It has not been ascertained why Kolomiets left his office abruptly and on the same day departed for Belarus without explanation, after deleting several important files on his computer.

Reporters without Borders became involved early on with a call to find the journalist and then to open a criminal investigation into the finding that the death was a case of suicide, completely unrelated to Kolomiets' journalistic profession.

On 26 November, following continued pressure from Reporters without Borders and the victim's family and friends, the Ukrainian prosecutor's office agreed to allow an independent expert investigation into these claims. (WWW.RSF.ORG, 27 Nov 02) Reporters without Borders offered to supply this expert, a French pathologist, having expressed particular concern about the speed with which the conclusions about the journalist's death were reached.

Kolomiets owned 50% of the shares of the Ukrayinsky Novyniy Agency, which he had created in 1997. The other 50% belong to Nikolay Khomchenko, first deputy presidential chief of staff.

BELARUS
No Entry
In the course of the discussion over the Czech denial of a visa for President Aleksandr Lukashenka to attend the Prague NATO summit, 14 European countries imposed a visa ban on Lukashenka and 7 of his ministers on 19 November.
The 15th EU country, Portugal, has not joined the ban. Portugal's decision is connected with its current OSCE (Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe) presidency. The OSCE is still attempting to find a compromise with the Belarus authorities after its mission's members were expelled from Minsk in late October. There has been some rapprochement; Lukashenka once again has begun making statements about his willingness to talk with the OSCE. There will be a 55-nation OSCE meeting in Porto on 6-7 December, and Belarus participation should not be excluded at this stage.

Reactions from Belarus to the travel ban have been diverse. Some members of the Belarus opposition have voiced their support. Members of parliament have pointed to the Portuguese "window" and the necessity not to alienate the OSCE mission, but it has also been made clear that this European decision is bound to drive Belarus closer to Russia. The Belarus leadership immediately slammed the visa denial as "an act of undisguised pressure on a sovereign state aimed at resurrecting the dangerous practice of solving political problems with force."

(RFE/RL NEWSLINE, 22 Nov 02) Belarusian Ambassador to NATO, Siergey Martynov, delivered a particularly harsh address at a sitting of the Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council on 22 November, calling the denial "a despicable act without a precedent." (ITAR-TASS, 22 Nov 02; FBIS-SOV-2002-1122, via World News Connection) However, he mentioned the contribution Belarus makes to European security by its stopping the flow of immigration and drug trafficking. He also sought to take the moral high ground, stating that Belarus does "not have the right to abandon the responsibility for participation in the coalition" and will continue its cooperation. (RFE/RL NEWSLINE, 25 Nov 02)

Pressure from the West on Minsk is increasing -- and while Western disapproval is due officially to human rights abuses, it is also undoubtedly based on Belarus' links and alleged military aid to Iraq. Tellingly, Belarus recently was discussed in a Washington conference hosted by the American Enterprise Institute, under the heading of "Axis of Evil: Belarus - The Missing Link."
Lukashenka’s grip on Belarus probably could be undermined only by a clear withdrawal of Russian support for the dictator. Lukashenka again turned toward Russia in the face of the snubs he has received from the West in recent weeks. On 19 November, he called President Putin to arrange a meeting for 27 November. Although this meeting was concerned primarily with economic matters, the development of the Russia-Belarus Union also was discussed and a meeting for the Supreme State Council session of the Union State of Russia and Belarus was set to take place at the end of this year or the beginning of next.

**MOLDOVA**

**Actions speak louder than security agreements**

As the year draws to a close there is little (if any) surprise that a significant amount of Russian troops and ammunition remain in the Transdniestr region of Moldova. Progress toward removal of the ammunition stockpiles and security forces in the disputed region has been marginal at best. A 1999 OSCE agreement called for Russia to demilitarize disputed Transdniestr by the end of 2002. The pending failure to meet the established withdrawal criteria should come as no surprise in light of the slow pace set by the Russians since the onset of the agreement in October of this year. Even if Moscow had maintained the unimpressive cadence of three trains full of ammunition per day departing the region, this would have allowed barely for removal of the munition prior to the December 2002 deadline. (THE NIS OBSERVED, 16 Oct 02) Trains full of troops and ammunition leaving Transdniestr have to this point been sporadic and unpredictable. However, in contrast to this poor performance, the "Excuse Express" has maintained a perfect schedule from Moscow to Chisinau and all points beyond.

In a truly predictable (if not UN-esque) statement, Vice Chairman for the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly Kimmo Kiliunen expressed "disappointment" with the Russian failure to comply with the approaching deadline. This comment marked
the first time that the OSCE openly admitted Russia would not meet the conditions established in the 1999 agreement. Kiliunen further added that removal of Russian troops from the region would result in a "neutralization" of the Tiraspol regime's financial resources, (INFOTAG, 20 Nov 02; via Lexis-Nexis) apparently commenting on the extralegal financial activities that are commonplace in the self-proclaimed separatist republic. If current trends hold true, ammunition trains may not be departing the Transdneistr on schedule, but the flow of "financial resources" is likely to remain steady well past the December 2002 deadline.

The 1999 five-sided agreement between the OSCE, Russia, Ukraine, Moldova and Tiraspol was intended to curb tension in the region and facilitate movement toward a resolution of the separatist Transdniestr problem. (INTERFAX, 22 Nov 02; FBIS-SOV-2002-1122, via World News Connection) However, the combination of Russian inefficiency coupled with a complete lack of will for final resolution appears to be having the opposite effect. Increasing anxiety (in Chisinau) and a continuing aversion to compromise (in Tiraspol) were evident in recent comments by officials from the two sides.

Grigory Marakuta, chairman of the Transdniestr parliament, referred to the pending Russian withdrawal as a "strategic blunder" that could influence the balance of power in the region. Markuta went on to offer an alternative to the evacuation of Russian weapons and ammunition from the region, namely that the materials would be destroyed in place. His recommendation was curious at best, citing safety concerns regarding the serious hazard posed by the transportation of ammunition that is well past its normal storage life. This proposal is most interesting in its direct contradiction of an earlier Tiraspol insistence that Russian troops not destroy the ammunition in place due to anticipated environmental impact. (MOLDOVA AZI, 29 Nov 02)
Following a meeting with Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Vyacheslav Trubnikov, Moldovan President Vladimir Voronin stressed that "leaders in the Transdneistr have hindered Russia's compliance with commitments made at the OSCE summit in Istanbul, thereby posing a serious threat to the stability and security in the region." (ITAR-TASS, 26 Nov 02; FBIS-SOV-2002-1126, via World News Connection)

The lack of progress in the Transdniestr issue was overshadowed briefly by the conclusion of the NATO summit in Prague. Conflicting comments from Chisinau regarding Moldova's aspirations for NATO membership further clouded the diplomatic landscape. In statements made on the same day, President Voronin and Prime Minister Vasile Tarlev respectively entertained, and then categorically denied, any Moldovan desire for membership in the alliance. During a speech from Prague, Voronin stressed that the newest round of NATO expansion posed no threat to his country, with a subtle hint that Moldova had not fully ruled out membership, (ONE TV, 22 Nov 02; BBC Monitoring, via Lexis-Nexis) while Tarlev offered a significantly different position, stating that his country had no intention of joining alliances of any type. (INTERFAX, 22 Nov 02; FBIS SOV-2002-1122, via World News Connection)

Lack of effort? Lack of political will? Lack of resources? A new Green movement in the Transdniest? Answers to these and other non-questions remain open for discussion. Regrettably, the removal of military stockpiles and accompanying security forces from the Transdneistr does not appear to be drawing any closer to realization. Under such circumstances it is likely that the outbound train schedule from the Transdneistr will remain unreliable for the foreseeable future.

Newly Independent States: Caucasus
By Miriam Lanskoy
GEORGIA

Debate over BTC route

President Eduard Shevardnadze finally has overruled the Georgian environmental protection ministry's rejection of the proposed route for the Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan pipeline (on the grounds that it would jeopardize the Borjomi Gorge, the site that produces Georgia's famous Borjomi spring water).

(RUSTAVI-2, 29 Nov 02; BBC Monitoring, via ISI Emerging Markets Database)

The path initially proposed for the pipeline would have traversed the Akhalkalaki district, which was rejected because of the Russian military base on the territory.

The process of determining a politically and environmentally safe route spurred considerable controversy in Azerbaijan, where the Georgian environmental ministry's action was perceived as a selfish stalling maneuver to obtain higher payments for the section of the pipeline. Georgia had raised 32 environment-related issues with consortium officials, which in Azerbaijan are perceived as "demands." (ZAMAN, 23 Nov 02; BBC Monitoring, via ISI Emerging Markets Database) An Azerbaijani paper accused Georgia of fulfilling "a political order" from EU ecologists who oppose the pipeline. "Georgia may lose potential transit payments which currently comprise half of its annual budget .... Georgia is playing against its own strategic partners, the USA, Turkey and Azerbaijan ... mainly at the instigation of the European Union (France, Holland etc.) ecologists."

(YENI MUSAVAT, 28 Nov 02; BBC Monitoring, via ISI Emerging Markets Database)

Will the Security Council take up Abkhazia?

The United Nations Security Council (SC) was scheduled to take up the situation in Abkhazia on 20 November but that discussion has been postponed until December. (PRIME NEWS AGENCY, 20 Nov 02; BBC Monitoring, via ISI Emerging Markets Database) When finally held, the session will have to address Abkhazia's brazen lack of cooperation with UN processes and representatives. Russia is enabling and inspiring Abkhazia's intransigent stance and in recent
weeks have been pressing the UN to allow Abkhazia to send a representative to the SC session. (PRIME NEWS, 18 Nov 02; BBC Monitoring, via ISI Emerging Markets Database)

In February 2002, Dieter Boden, the UN representative for the Abkhaz conflict, had in hand a finalized draft document, "Basic Principles for the Distribution of the Competencies between Tbilisi and Sukhumi." This document had been coordinated with all the members of the Friends of Georgia group, including Russia, and was supposed to serve as a basis for negotiations. However, the Abkhaz side refused even to take receipt of the document. (THE NIS OBSERVED, 13 Feb 02)

Since February, Abkhazia has not budged from this obstructionist stance. The most recent "UN Secretary General's Report on the situation in Abkhaz, Georgia," dated 14 October 2002, indicates that the Abkhaz side still has not accepted the draft for review. On 5 October, the Abkhaz prime minister, Anri Jergenia, refused to meet with the UN special representative, Heidi Tagliavini, who wanted to brief him on the contents of the document. "The Russian Federation offered to facilitate a meeting in Moscow with the de facto Abkhaz Prime Minister Anri Jergenia. It was envisaged that, at the meeting, Mr. Jergenia would be acquainted with the substance of the paper on competences and the rationale behind it, but that it would not be handed over; ... The meeting was scheduled for 5 October but it was not held because Mr. Jergenia rejected a discussion of the paper and the participation of my Special Representative." (S/2002/1141; via www.un.org)

On 29 November, Jergenia was fired from his position by the Abkhaz de facto president, Vladislav Ardzinba. Jergenia's replacement is Gennadi Gagulia. (PRIME NEWS, 29 Nov 02; BBC Monitoring, via ISI Emerging Markets Database) However, this personnel reshuffle should not be viewed by the SC as a resolution of the problem. Ardzinba's position is no different than Jergenia's; in
fact, the categorical rejection of the UN document was articulated by Ardzinba’s representative back in February. (THE NIS OBSERVED, 13 Feb 02)

Georgian representatives point out that a number of measures can be taken to move the situation out of the deadlock in which it has persisted for 10 years. First, the CIS peacekeeping force should be made truly multinational, according to Parliament Speaker Nino Burjanadze. (GEORGIAN TELEVISION, 12 Nov 02; BBC Monitoring, via ISI Emerging Markets Database) Presently it is composed exclusively of Russian soldiers, numbering between 1,500 -2,000 with a maximum presence of 3,000 mandated by the CIS resolution. Second, the Georgian side is seeking international monitoring of the Kodori Gorge, the only portion of Abkhazia in which Georgia has a toehold. Third, Georgian diplomats are pressing for the UN to impose sanctions on Abkhazia. (KAVKASIA-PRESS, 13 Nov 02; BBC Monitoring, via ISI Emerging Markets Database)

Georgian politicians also are becoming more outspoken about Russia’s manipulation of this conflict. Burjanadze told her television viewers that she had asked for "radical steps" against Russia in conversations with visiting UN Undersecretary for Peacekeeping Jean-Marie Guehenno:

"In recent years we have witnessed many instances of the Russian authorities obstructing the discussion of this issue by the Security Council so that they do not even need to use their power of veto. ... I told [Guehenno] openly that the international community should exert political pressure on the Russian authorities. ..."...

...There have been many other instances of Russia taking absolutely illegal and wrong steps and using double standards. The international community should react to this in an appropriate manner. The UN should ask Russia questions and demand that it provide a valid explanation as to why it has been obstructing this decision... We want the UN to take radical steps to stop its members applying
double standards and end the conflict." (GEORGIAN TELEVISION, 12 Nov 02; BBC Monitoring, via ISI Emerging Markets Database)

Tamaz Nedareishvili, the leader of the ethnic Georgian refugees from Abkhazia, is even blunter: "First of all everybody has to admit this is not a Georgian-Abkhaz conflict, but Russia's aggression against Georgia. Russia fought a war against us in Abkhazia ..." (WWW.CIVIL.GE, 19 Nov 02)

Tempers in Georgia are heating up over this issue, as can be seen also in a recent controversy between Nedareishvili and Aslan Abashidze, the pro-Russian president of Adjaria and Shevardnadze's representative for Abkhaz conflict negotiations. Abashidze had suggested that Georgia should lift its economic and traffic blockade of Abkhazia. "If the Abkhaz side declares readiness to discuss its future role in a single Georgian state, we may ease the blockade and sanctions," Nedareishvili said, "However, since they still claim to be an independent state, I do not understand why we should lift the blockade and sanctions. I wish to make the following statement: even if sanctions are lifted, not a single train, car or ship will enter the territory of Abkhazia because we will blow them up. They will go flying up in the air." (GEORGIAN TELEVISION, 21 Oct 02; BBC Monitoring, via ISI Emerging Markets Database)

If the UN does not produce results soon, these passions indeed may boil over.

Newly Independent States: Central Asia

By David Montgomery

An assassination attempt and the threat of opposition
The headline event in Central Asia for the past few weeks was the attempted assassination of Turkmen President Saparmurat Niyazov. Niyazov, known in colloquial terms as "Turkmenbashi" or Father of the Turkmen People, is
renowned for having developed a cult-of-personality and for his strict management of the country that has drawn comparison to Lenin and Stalin. Opposition leaders, of course, deny responsibility for the attack but note that there is no shortage of individuals seeking new leadership in Turkmenistan. While this recent attempt on Niyazov's life is perhaps the most radical expression of dissatisfaction with the government, the establishment throughout Central Asia faces challenges from opposition parties. Kyrgyzstan continues to struggle with regional tensions between the northern and southern parts of the country, and Kazakhstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan all have reacted to threats of Islamic extremism and terrorism. On an international level, NATO leaders recently discussed ways to foster closer relations with the countries of Central Asia, viewing these countries as possible allies against terrorism.

Assassination attempt

The narrative of the assassination attempt is roughly as follows: At 7 a.m. on 25 November, Niyazov's motorcade was approached by three vehicles attempting to block the path of his bulletproof car. At the intersection of Turkmenbashi and Aitakov streets in Ashgabat, the attackers opened fire on the motorcade. Several persons were injured during the ensuing 20-minute exchange. Niyazov's car managed to escape and, according to the official version of the attack, Niyazov claimed that he "was already at [his] office when [he] was told about the shooting." (TIMES OF CENTRAL ASIA, 28 Nov 02; via www.times.kg)

Within hours, Niyazov named four opposition voices and former government officials as being responsible for the attack - former Deputy Agriculture Minister Sapar Iklymov, former ambassador to Turkey Nurmukhammed Khanamov, former Foreign Minister Boris Shikhmuradov, and the National Bank chief and former Deputy Prime Minister Khudaiberdy Orazov. All, of course, denied responsibility for the attack.
Iklymov, who lives in Sweden after having been exiled in 1994, was singled out by Niyazov as the mastermind behind the attack. It was alleged that the cars used all belonged to Iklymov's relatives. Iklymov has acknowledged opposition to the Niyazov government but renounced violence as a means for change. He admitted knowing the other alleged co-conspirators but suggested a less-than-amiable relationship. (RFE/RL NEWSLINE, 28 Nov 02)

Orazov discounted his relation to the attack by alluding to the weakness of the plan: "Niyazov has two vehicles - a Mercedes and a jeep. Both have double plated armor. These vehicles cannot be destroyed by machine guns or even rocket-propelled grenades. Think for a minute. The alleged attackers let Niyazov go by, then they blocked the road in front of the police [following Niyazov]. If the plan had worked, it wouldn't have been for eliminating Niyazov." (RFE/RL NEWSLINE, 28 Nov 02)

Khanamov viewed Niyazov's accusations as an attempt to capitalize on the world's focus on terrorism and thereby eliminate opposition to his government. "Niyazov wants to portray us as terrorists so we will be returned to Turkmenistan," he said. (RFE/RL NEWSLINE, 28 Nov 02) But perhaps the most telling statement came from Shikhmuradov, who wrote on his website: "I have been asked the question 'Who could have fired at Niyazov?' hundreds of times today. The answer is simple and frightening: Niyazov deserves as many deadly gunshots as [the] lives and destinies he has ruined. There is no person in Turkmenistan today who would not like to be free of the dictator's oppression." (EURASIANET, 26 Nov 02; via www.eurasianet.org)

Nonetheless, the investigation continues. A spokesperson for the president said on 26 November that 16 persons were arrested in connection with the attack, but unofficial sources put the number at over 100. (RFE/RL NEWLINE, 28 Nov 02) Following the news of the attack, Niyazov's adherents reportedly met to express their support for the president. A special meeting of 1,500 citizens requested a
parliamentary resolution supporting the death penalty (which was abolished in 1999) for all involved in the assassination attempt. (ITAR-TASS, 1825 GMT, 28 Nov 02; FBIS-SOV-2002-1128, and ITAR-TASS, 1247 GMT, 27 Nov 02; FBIS-SOV-2002-1127, via World News Connection) It is unclear whether these demonstrations were genuine expressions of the general population's mood or attempts to gain favor with Niyazov, who has forced most of his opposition into exile.

**Opposition in Kyrgyzstan**

The opposition movement in Kyrgyzstan, on the other hand, appears to be threatening the political establishment from within the country. Protests and opposition rallies continue to be staged in Bishkek, as they have since the March 2002 killing of six residents from the southern region of Aksy. On 14 November, around 1,000 persons from the Kara-Kuldzha and Aksy regions secretly organized a protest march to Ala-Too Square in the center of the capital. (CENTRAL ASIA - CAUCASUS ANALYST, 20 Nov 02; via www.cacianalyst.org) The protesters were stopped before they could reach Bishkek. Those who do succeed in staging protests in the capital often are detained and fined for holding unsanctioned rallies. (INTERFAX, 1648 GMT, 19 Nov 02; FBIS-SOV-2002-1119, and INTERFAX, 0922 GMT, 18 Nov 02; FBIS-SOV-2002-1118, via World News Connection)

According to Kyrgyz Foreign Minister Askar Aytmatov, the government administration "is doing its best to promote democratic reforms and observe [the] rights and freedoms of individuals and the mass media." However, in the same interview, Aytmatov accused the media of "information terrorism," implying that critical coverage of the government is inaccurate. (INTERFAX, 1312 GMT, 28 Nov 02; FBIS-SOV-2002-1128, via World News Connection) While in comparison to the government of Turkmenistan, Kyrgyzstan offers a relatively liberal platform for the opposition to voice dissent, President Askar Akaev recently warned the opposition forces that "the national leadership will take all necessary measures to
curb any attempt to destabilize society." (INTERFAX, 1358 GMT, 20 Nov 02; FBIS-SOV-2002-1120, via World News Connection) These "measures" can be seen in the thwarting of protests marches or the recent detention of a resident from the Jalal-Abad region in the south, for having 100 books and twice as many leaflets on the banned religious extremist party Hizb-ut Tahrir. (INTERFAX, 1411 GMT, 28 Nov 02; FBIS-SOV-2002-1128, via World News Connection)

Although Akaev has announced that he will not seek another term as president in 2005, members of the opposition continue to voice their dissatisfaction with his government. (CENTRAL ASIA - CAUCASUS ANALYST, 20 Nov 02; via www.cacianalyst.org) And while the most extreme opposition move has been the request of the Kara-Kuldzha and Uzgen districts of Osh Region (in the south) to request annexation as part of the Russian Federation, (INTERFAX, 1331 GMT, 28 Nov 02; FBIS-SOV-2002-1128, via World News Connection) the opposition movement is active at many levels. Given its success in getting media attention and upsetting the Akaev government, protest marches are likely to continue as political parties position themselves against the government.

**Other threats and NATO**

With terrorists being sentenced to death in Tajikistan (ITAR-TASS, 0522 GMT, 28 Nov 02; FBIS-SOV-2002-1128, via World News Connection) and Uzbek President Islam Karimov declaring terrorism as "the 21st century plague," (ITAR-TASS, 1623 GMT, 21 Nov 02; FBIS-SOV-2002-1128, via World News Connection) Kazakh President Nursultan Nazarbaev has argued for continued support of NATO involvement in Central Asia. Speaking to journalists in Prague, he said that Kazakhstan's "participation in NATO activities is doubtlessly beneficial from the point of view of our own security." (INTERFAX, 1444 GMT, 22 Nov 02; FBIS-SOV-2002-1122, via World News Connection)

At the recent meeting of NATO leaders, one senior alliance diplomat referred to Central Asia as one of NATO's "next frontier[s]." (TIMES OF CENTRAL ASIA, 28
Nov 02, via www.times.kg) The reference, of course, is not that Central Asian countries will become members of NATO, but rather that NATO will develop a "framework" to help these countries become better integrated in the campaign against terrorism.

While NATO integration benefits many, perhaps the greatest benefactors in the region are the presidents whose troops are better trained to fight terrorism. But as terrorism (as distasteful as it is) becomes one way for opposition groups to challenge the ruling governments, there is the danger that draconian measures against legitimate opposition movements may be justified by uncritically equating opposition movements with terrorism.

Newly Independent States: Baltic States
By Michael Varuolo

Celebrations end quickly as focus turns to security systems
Now that the Prague Summit is over and the Baltic states have accomplished their long-desired foreign policy objective - obtaining invitations to join the North Atlantic Treaty Organization - these republics have shifted their focus toward force modernization and domestic security concerns. Membership within NATO carries great responsibility and dedication to the continuation of security reforms. As Lithuanian President Valdas Adamkus informed President Bush, the summit "proves that we are ready to join the free world and fulfill all the responsibilities" of membership. (AGENCE-FRANCE PRESSE, 23 Nov 02; via Lexis-Nexis)

Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania have been working toward solidifying their places within the alliance.

Estonia has realized that, now more than ever, it needs to continue its previous military reforms. During an interview with Novaya gazeta, Prime Minister Siim Kallas stated that "we do not intend to build large military bases or anything of
the sort on our territory. We will mainly be trying to develop up-to-date potential in human resources and train highly qualified military professionals.” (BALTIC NEWS SERVICE, 28 Nov 02; via Lexis-Nexis) Kallas said that Estonia is seeking to determine its role within the alliance by avoiding the creation of a large standing mechanized force and focusing on specialized tasks. Kallas stated that in the past Estonia has worked well with NATO in mine-clearing and logistical operations. (BALTIC NEWS SERVICE, 28 Nov 02; via Lexis-Nexis).

One manner of strengthening Estonia's security has been a tightening of the country's visa and immigration policy. On 29 November, Estonian Interior Minister Ain Seppik banned the entry of 70 persons. The ban, which will remain in effect for six years, will be applied as well to all other foreigners who have committed administrative or misdemeanor offenses in Estonia. (BALTIC NEWS SERVICE, 29 Nov 02; via Lexis-Nexis) The intent is to establish a legal procedure to deny entry to persons who threaten the security or violate the laws of Estonia. (BALTIC NEWS SERVICE, 29 Nov 02; via Lexis-Nexis).

Meanwhile, Latvia is trying to improve its current military posture by seeking to retain Raimonds Graube as the Chief of Defense Forces (CHOD), who oversaw many of the force modernization programs that were instrumental in Latvia's drive for NATO membership. Graube, who will be the first CHOD to complete a full four-year tour of duty, is required by Latvian law to step down in February. His continuation in office is supported by Defense Minister Girts Valdis Kristovskis, who is confident that Graube's situation is special and deserves an exception. Although President Vaira Vike-Freiberga has agreed to look into a possible extension of Graube's term of service, she also has stated that she will review possible replacements. (BALTIC NEWS SERVICE, 28 Nov 02; via Lexis-Nexis) Graube has not commented on the possibility of his continued service as the CHOD; instead he has focused upon issues surrounding the future of Latvian forces.
In conjunction with Kristovskis, Graube has been trying to determine an adequate location for NATO radar stations. The current proposal from the Ministry of Defense places the NATO standard three-dimensional radar station at the Audrini airport in eastern Latvia. (BALTIC NEWS SERVICE, 28 Nov 02; via Lexis-Nexis) Although there has been some protest from area residents, the government has taken great pains to show how the employment of the system would not disturb those living in the area and may in fact provide new investment opportunities for the economically challenged area. In addition to the placement of the radar station, Latvia - like Estonia -- is searching for specialized roles that could contribute immediately to the overall security of the alliance. According to Defense Ministry State Secretary Maris Riekstins, Latvia could provide NATO with specialized units of military police, medics, sappers, and possibly combat divers. (BALTIC NEWS SERVICE, 27 Nov 02, via Lexis-Nexis)

Lithuania also has begun the process of increasing its force modernization programs. The call for a professional military is growing. Eugenijus Gentvilas, the opposition leader in parliament, is recommending strongly that Lithuania move towards a professional force of 12,000 officers, NCOs and soldiers. Gentvilas supports his position with two important considerations: NATO responsibilities will require Lithuania to maintain a professional force capable of rapid deployment, while a cost analysis for a conscript system demonstrates that it is more expensive than a fully professional force. (BALTIC NEWS SERVICE, 27 Nov 02; via Lexis-Nexis) Although the transition to a fully professional force is not likely until 2006, Gentvilas is pushing for this movement to begin immediately and his proposition is gaining support from his colleagues in parliament.

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