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New FSB structure
RF President Vladimir Putin issued a somewhat terse decree on 11 August, which outlines a new structure for the leadership of the Federal Security Service (FSB).

According to the edict (No. 960, signed 11 Aug 03; Financial Times Information, 15 Aug 03; Global Newswire via Lexis-Nexis), the FSB "is entitled to have two first deputy directors …; [one of whom] is head of the Border Services; a secretary of state who is deputy director of [the FSB]; another deputy director [whose duties are not spelled out] ; six deputy directors who are heads of departments [within the FSB]; and a deputy director who is chief of the [FSB] Inspectorate; and to form a Collegium of 19 members."

As is often the case, the nature of the individuals who fill the stipulated posts likely will determine the relative influence of the position. A much longer presidential decree has spelled out, in great detail, the responsibilities of the FSB and will be covered in an upcoming N.I.S. Observed.

Apparatus politics (Woe from wit)
The first few years of Putin's ascendancy in Moscow, observers and analysts catalogued the travails of the satellite apparatchiki who glided through Kremlin intrigues with the dour Judo whiz, finally landing with dazzling success at the pinnacle of Russian power. Even through the first two years of his Presidency, Putin-watchers worried over the number of St. Petersburgers who followed their mentor from the frozen North to the gilded halls. Insulating himself from the
clannish Yel'tsin staffers with his own personnel, Putin would ferret out the bureaucratic corruption and punish those who prospered from Russia's weak state in the 1990's. Or so we could be excused for thinking....

Perhaps the Petersburgers would grow too powerful along their march to glory and, in the euphoria of Kremlin intrigues, overstep their authority -- endangering society with their lawless loyalty to Putin. As their devotion clashed with the ideals of democratic, market transformation, the seasoned 'reformers' of the Yel'tsin era warned of a 'cult of personality' and unchecked ambition.

If these scenarios sound vaguely familiar, it's because they were, all too often, tales spun for journalists by a deep Kremlin insider, who, no matter how many times he teases with a new conspiracy tale, seems to have an uncanny inside track on the apparat.

Yes, it's Gleb Pavlovsky. And yes, he has gone flying off the tracks on occasion: the hysteria about a "Hasidic-paramasonic" conspiracy back in 2000 (The Moscow Times, 5 Oct 00 via Lexis-Nexis) when Berezovsky and Gusinsky were targets du jour of the regime; and the leak of the "Version-1" mutinous drafts [for which he spent four days in Lefortovo, courtesy of Sergei Stepashin (Moscow News, No. 48, 28 Nov 01 via Lexis-Nexis)] back when he thought Kremlin powerhouse Korzhakov buttered his bread. All in all however, he has either been tuned directly in to the "under-the-rug" apparat infighting, or propagandizing for one Kremlin strongman or t'other directing the analysts' focus from enemy to prey with remarkable agility.

These days however, he seems surprisingly reliable. And these days, he wants us to understand that the real danger is the current battle between the former security officers (siloviki) and the oligarchs. Once again, what we really seem to be facing is a conflict between old and new money -- with old being defined as "90s" -- perhaps money is too constricting a category, but it seems to lie at the
heart of the matter. The former KGB/FSB guys (among them, more than a few St. Petersburgers) want access to the trappings of wealth, which often translates directly to political power (or simply buys political perks). Given the enthusiastic patronage of Putin, it may seem counterintuitive that security service officers would need greater access to political power. The key may now be found less in their need to increase their own access than in their desire to restrict the access, and therefore the power (and consequently independence) of other groups.

The siloviki seem keenly aware that money is fungible: their concern that Mikhail Khodorkovsky and Yukos were turning their wealth into political clout and police protection almost certainly precipitated this summer's moves against the Yukos clan.

Pavlovsky, speaking now for the former 'Family' members and their wealthy patrons, warns that a "minority" within the presidential administration is on the political attack "in opposition to the course of President Putin." (OFFICIAL KREMLIN INTERNATIONAL BROADCAST, 2 Sep 03 via Lexis-Nexis)

Pavlovsky's warning are dire: "The President will be actually put under their control." (Ibid.) In this, he seems to long for the period of the Yel'tsin administration when factions were calmly played off against one another: no one group gained supremacy until Yel'tsin succumbed to illness and control in the Kremlin passed to the 'Family'. Perhaps Pavlovsky's awareness of the ability of one faction to seize opportunities to defeat the other makes him particularly sensitive to the threat posed by the powerful siloviki. Perhaps he has his own patrons to pacify or he realizes the FSB men know the skeletons in his own closet, either way, Pavlovsky's vulnerability may provide a peek under the rug at Kremlin dirt.

Pavlovsky provides us (and presumably therefore the President) with a list of names of the new mutinous conspirators: Presidential Administration Deputies
And now for the economy

President Vladimir Putin’s decree on the security services, signed on 15 August, indicates that, for the moment at least, formal restructuring of the Federal Security Service (FSB) is over. The Presidential Decree established a new command structure for the Security Service. According to the legislation, several new Deputy-Directorships will be created, and the FSB from now on will be governed by a Collegium of 19 members. [(ROSSIYSKAYA GAZETA, 20 Aug 03; Financial Times via Lexis-Nexis) For further details see "Executive Branch" above]

Judging by recent events, however, the FSB’s mission to increase its influence over Russian society will continue unabated. Not only is the FSB rumored effectively to have taken control of both the Interior Ministry and the GRU, but also, as of 1 September, the FSB’s purview also extends into the private/economic sector: the new Vice-President of the Alrosa diamond company is FSB Colonel Yuri Ionov. There are conflicting explanations for Ionov’s appointment. The Government’s line is that Ionov has been appointed to protect
the company’s economic security. His job description is, in effect, to counter industrial espionage.

An unnamed source within the company, however, is quoted by Kommersant (PRIME-TASS News Wire, 20 August 03 via ISI Emerging Markets Database) as having said that the Federal Government is seeking to gain control of the firm’s cashflow, by obtaining an 8 percent stake in the company, and that Ionov is to "act on behalf of the government" in order to attain this goal.

While the FSB’s level of penetration of all levels of society is extremely disconcerting, there is some small encouragement to be gained from the fact that there have been two recent articles in the Russian press (both published by Nezavisimaya gazeta) addressing this issue. On 29 August, Nezavisimaya gazeta carried a story in which the author, Alexander Bovin, wrote that "Military and Security people in government are becoming a danger to the nation." Bovin noted that over half of the Security Council seats are occupied by former Security Service Officers, that five of seven super—governors are Generals, and that some 6,000 ex-KGB/FSB officers "hold important positions in the State Apparatus." (NEZAVISIMAYA GAZETA, 29 Aug 03 via What the Papers Say via ISI Emerging Markets Database)

At this point, Bovin halts his analysis. Rather than posing serious questions as to Putin’s motivation, Bovin prefers to assume that the President was simply misguided and perhaps naïve in placing his FSB cronies in positions of power:

"I don’t know whether Putin understood that in promoting senior officers to serve as the pillar of the State, and surrounding himself with the military, he would have to satisfy their corporate interests, at least partially, sooner or later. Perhaps he failed to understand that." (Ibid.) The previous story, an interview with Olga Kryshtanovskaya, a faculty member at the Russian Academy of Sciences, reached the same conclusion about the presence of (former) security officers.
"Not everything Putin does is to their liking; but they view him as one of their own, and hope that the President will give them a chance to run the country. That is, they hope he will permit them to 'restore order' as they understand it, and as they hope Putin understands it too." (NEZAVISIMAYA GAZETA Aug 20 03; WPS via ISI Emerging Markets Database)

Based on the fact that much, if not all, of the FSB’s power stems directly from the Presidential Apparatus, including Presidential decrees, which have the force of law, it is difficult to grant any credibility to Bovin and Kryshtanovskaya’s pretense of Presidential naivety. One can only conclude that the economic sector is simply the next target in the FSB’s campaign forever increasing influence.

Anti-terrorist agencies gone AWOL?
Since the blast at the Mozdok Military hospital compound on August 1, there have been two further serious terrorist incidents in Russia. First, in Krasnodar (Southern Federal District) on August 25, three simultaneous explosions tore through the town. The blasts resulted in three deaths, and twenty persons were wounded. (RIA; Oreanda-Economic News from Regions, 25 Aug 03 via ISI Emerging Markets Database)

The second, more serious, attack occurred on 3 September in the Stavropol region, where a commuter train traveling near Kislovodsk was blown up. Six people were killed in the blast. Investigators from the FSB and Interior Ministries discovered two craters along the tracks, which, they have claimed, are consistent with 5-KG charges of TNT, detonated remotely. (IZVESTIA PRESS DIGEST, 4 Sept 03 via ISI Emerging Markets Database)

Blame for both acts has been placed squarely at the door of Chechen terrorists, with Nikolai Khazikov, Chief of the Caucasus Regional Prosecutor General's
Office, hinting that Aslan Maskhadov and Shamil Basaev were the instigators of the operation.

In the aftermath of the Mozdok bombing, it was easy to raise suspicion that some terrorist acts were being allowed to take place in order to strengthen the position of the Security Services. It is now almost impossible to avoid such a conclusion, based on Interior Minister Boris Gryzlov’s statement in the wake of the first of these most recent attacks, that domestic legislation to enhance the authority of the security services in their efforts to counter terrorism is expected in September. (NEZAVISIMAYA GAZETA, 26 Aug 03 via ISI Emerging Markets Database)

It would seem the Security Services might not be satisfied with anything short of full control.

**Russian Federation: Foreign Relations**

By Scott Dullea

**Iraq — Is Russia jumping the fence or just walking it?**

Last spring the Berlin-Paris-Moscow alliance made rough going for the U.S. in its bid for international unity against Iraq, but half a year later the partnership may have lost a member. Russia now appears ready to participate in the reconstruction of Iraq as evidenced by President Putin's statement that he "sees nothing bad" in sending peacekeeping troops to Iraq under a U.S. command. (RIA NOVOSTI, 30 Aug 03 via www.pravda.ru); although military officers have stated that these should not be combat troops. The main sticking point remains the revised resolution that the U.S. has submitted to the Security Council in draft form. Although Russia’s foreign minister, Igor Ivanov, stated that the draft resolution needs "serious work" before it could be considered acceptable,
Moscow has not yet rejected it completely as Paris and Berlin have. (REUTERS, 5 Sep 03 via Johnson's Russia List (JRL) #7313, 7 Sep 03)

Though it may have been publicly impossible for Moscow to support the U.S. call for war in Iraq, now that it is a fait accompli, the Kremlin appears to be looking at the matter in more practical terms. There are genuine economic benefits to consider. These potential profits include oil deals and other trade agreements made prior to the collapse of the Iraqi regime under Saddam Hussein totaling nearly U.S. $40 billion. (NIS OBSERVED, Volume VIII, No. 12, 30 Jul 03) If Moscow resists American leadership and rejects participating in rebuilding Iraq, it could stand to lose not only money and prestige, but a role in Middle Eastern affairs as well.

Moscow’s circumscribed willingness to support Washington in its effort to gain UN support for reconstructing Iraq may be a handy piece of leverage as President Putin heads to the U.S. on 24 September to address the UN General Assembly and then to visit President Bush. Washington may appreciate the assistance of a Russian peacekeeping contingent – a contribution that could inspire others, such as Turkey or India, who are on the fence about contributing troops (pending a new UN resolution and arrangements concerning the command of the peacekeeping forces).

It remains to be seen, however, if Moscow will remain so amenable to the idea of contributing forces and allowing them to be under direct American command. It wasn’t long ago that very serious, complicated negotiations and special command arrangements were necessary before Russian forces participated as members of the Bosnian and Kosovo peacekeeping forces. Additionally, there are inherent dangers in getting personally involved with the peacekeeping efforts in Iraq. Moscow currently is trying to gain influence in the Muslim world by applying for membership in the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC), which was just recently discussed with a visiting delegation from Saudi Arabia.
Cooperating with the U.S. in the occupation of Iraq could be seen negatively by other Islamic states. Moreover, even though President Putin’s re-election bid is probably solid enough to weather almost any negative fallout, the possible loss of Russian lives in Iraq occupation operations could prove an untenable risk in the upcoming election season.

**Timing is everything - Russia stays the course on Bushehr**

Despite U.S. protests, Moscow continues to move forward in its nuclear relationship with Iran. In late August, the U.S. Undersecretary of State for Arms Control and International Security, John Bolton, visited Moscow to discuss issues pertaining to Iran and North Korea. Mr. Bolton left Russia without significant results as Moscow is holding firm to its position despite public pressure from the U.S. State Department, which stressed that no country, including Russia, should engage in nuclear cooperation with Iran until Tehran addresses the questions posed by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) as well as the international community. (REUTERS, 27 Aug 03 via JRL #7304, 28 Aug 03)

Despite indications to the contrary, Russia insists that its cooperation with Iran is completely transparent and directed solely towards peaceful, civilian purposes.

Unnamed Russian sources stated diplomatically that the meeting between Bolton and Russian officials, including the Minister of Atomic Energy Aleksandr Rumyantsev and Deputy Foreign Minister Sergei Kislyak, confirmed that the U.S. and Russia have "a common understanding of the need to work for Iran’s greater openness in the nuclear sphere," (INTERFAX, 26 Aug 03; FBIS-SOV-2003-0826 via World News Connection), however, Russia also countered U.S. complaints by claiming that certain Western nations may be contributing to the suspected Iranian nuclear weapons program. No further details were given. (Agent France Presse (AFP), 26 Aug 03 via JRL #7302, 27 Aug 03) Iranian press reports hailed Russia’s steadfastness and determination to continue the Russian-Iranian nuclear power project despite U.S. pressure. It viewed Russia’s resistance to the
Russia and Iran apparently have addressed a major U.S. complaint concerning spent nuclear fuel produced at the Bushehr plant. The danger of such fuel is that it could be used to produce weapons grade plutonium. But on 27 August the Russian Ministry of Atomic Energy stated that the Russian government had approved amendments to the Bushehr construction agreement that would obligate Iran to return the spent fuel to Russia. This amendment is expected to be signed by the two countries at the IAEA general session in Vienna 15-18 September 2003. (INTERFAX, 27 Aug 03; FBIS-SOV-2003-0827 via World News Connection) Once signed, Russia could begin delivery of nuclear fuel to Bushehr. However, there is no indication of any willingness to accept international supervision of the amendment's implementation.

Iran, of course, has to face the latest report from the IAEA that traces of uranium (beyond what is needed for civilian purposes) were detected in an Iranian centrifuge, a device critical in the production of weapons grade material. This may cause even Russia to tread more cautiously until matters are ironed out. The 15—18 September general session of the IAEA in Vienna may clarify where the agency stands with regard to Iran’s nuclear activities. However, Moscow has to deal also with a report on 22 August that Latvian customs officials in Riga had intercepted a Russian vessel bound for Iran loaded with 28 tons of military equipment including night vision devices and spare tank parts. The vessel has been detained on suspicion of smuggling strategic goods. (WWW.GAZETA.RU, 21 Aug 03 via RFE/RL NEWSLINE Vol. 7, No. 160, Part II, 22 Aug 03)

Nevertheless, Moscow maintains the offensive on the Iran issue; following Bolton’s departure; Russian media reported a Russian plan to build a second reactor at Bushehr. So far Moscow reportedly has handed over a feasibility study
to Tehran regarding the construction of such a second reactor. (ITAR-TASS, 26 Aug 03; FBIS-SOV-2003-0826 via World News Connection) The timing of this move following discussions with Undersecretary Bolton appears to demonstrate Russian resolve to disregard US concerns over continuing Russian-Iranian nuclear cooperation.

However, Moscow’s decision to postpone a scheduled meeting between a visiting Iranian parliamentarian delegation and Russian parliamentarians on 2 September (ITAR-TASS, 2 Sep 03; BBC Monitoring via ISI Emerging Markets Database) could indicate that the Kremlin is choosing to maneuver more cautiously in light of the upcoming IAEA’s board of governors meeting in Vienna on 8 September where, according to U.S. officials, the IAEA could take "various actions" regarding Iran. (WWW.CNN.COM, 5 Sep 03) Indeed Moscow may be hesitant to commit completely to its support of Iran until the timing is right, i.e., until the U.S. appears most vulnerable. Specifically, Russia might view the best opportunity to try to soften Washington’s opposition to its cooperation with Iran as the moment at which it can offer its support to the White House on the issue of a new UN resolution on Iraq. Putin’s visit with President Bush late in September may be just the occasion to test those waters.

Russian Federation: Domestic Issues and Legislative Branch

By Kate Martin

POLITICAL PARTIES

It’s my party, and I’ll cry if I want to

Despite a pledge of good behavior signed by a little more than half (27 out of 43) of the parties involved in the upcoming parliamentary race, mud — not to mention charges of interference and chicanery — has begun to be slung.
Chief among the slingers is Gennadi Zyuganov, leader of the Communist Party. Zyuganov, along with Union of Right Forces leader Boris Nemtsov, has complained that their respective parties are facing an information blockade due to the lack of independent media in the country, a blockade each plans to attack through regional appearances by party representatives. (ITAR-TASS, 26 Aug 03; Global News Wire; World News Connection via Lexis-Nexis and NEZAVISIMAYA GAZETA, 27 Aug 03 via Lexis-Nexis)

Moreover, Zyuganov has complained, not without cause, of Kremlin-backed attempts to chip away support from the KPRF, which polls continuously at approximately the same level of support as "Putin’s party," United Russia. The latest endeavor, he says, is a move by Dmitri Rogozin, chairman of the Federation Council and Putin’s envoy on Kaliningrad-related matters, along with Sergei Glazyev, the leader of Russia’s Regions and a member of the Communist faction in the State Duma, to form an election bloc of nationalist groups — groups previously aligned with the KPRF.

One is tempted to ascribe the bloc’s founding to a confluence of forces that includes ambition and a forward-looking attitude brought in by the younger politicians, with the power of Kremlin support. Glazyev had been considered a possible modernizing force for Russian communists, a transformation Zyuganov rigorously opposes. Indeed, in a text intended for Pravda (but distributed to other media outlets), Zyuganov wrote that his party remains closer to communism’s "primordial principles" than similar parties in Europe that have taken a path unacceptable to Russians. (THE ST. PETERSBURG TIMES, 22 Aug 03; Emerging Markets Datafile via Lexis-Nexis)

It is impossible, however, to overlook the insignificance of the parties that have joined the election bloc, as well as the haphazard manner of its formation. The bloc has no name, the rather hazy goal of uniting "all patriotic forces" to work on
a program "of national interests," (RIA NEWS AGENCY, 1055 GMT, 24 Aug 03; BBC Monitoring via Lexis-Nexis) and a fuzzy membership -- according to various reports, 15, 16 or 17 parties have joined. There is also the logistical problem of the distribution of seats — with no shared platform and so many members — if (and it's a big if) the bloc does manage to overcome the 5% minimum percentage of votes, who will have allocated the seats? If the statements made since the coalition was announced on 22 August provide any indication, the aim is to harness popular discontent and nostalgia for the "good old days" of Soviet domination. Parties that have joined the movement include the Congress of Russian Communities, Russia’s Regions, the Party of Labor, Native Fatherland Movement, For Holy Russia, Russia Traditional Party, Eurasia (not the better-known Eurasian Party), People's and Patriotic Union of Youth, Soyuz Movement, and the Social and Democratic Organization. (KOMMERSANT, 25 Aug 03; What the Papers Say (WPS) via Lexis-Nexis) Certainly, such a collection puts into doubt that this bloc is intended as a vehicle for Glazyev to modernize anything.

Subsequent efforts by the bloc have focused on attracting big names that solidify thoughts of nostalgia, such as the former chairman of the Central Bank, Viktor Gerashchenko, the Commander-in-Chief of the Airborne Troops, Colonel General Georgi Shpak, (KOMMERSANT, 26 Aug 03; WPS via Lexis-Nexis) and former Commander of the Soviet Ground Forces General Valentin Varennikov, Rogozin’s "idol in the early 1990s," who, as a member of the rebellious State Emergency Committee, refused an amnesty for the August 1991 attempted coup. (ARGUMENTY I FAKTY, 27 Aug 03; WPS via Lexis-Nexis)

To be sure, Rogozin is no stranger to rhetoric harkening back to the time when Russia successfully bulldozed its neighbors, ignoring notions of territorial sovereignty, but that tactic hasn’t really worked in a while — he saw that himself in Russia’s recent attempts to force Lithuania to back down over transit regulations concerning Kaliningrad. And, indeed, it seems that the Federation Council speaker hasn’t overcome the disappointment of seeing the European
Union side with Lithuania on the issue, as his statements demonstrate. "We will deal with the Kaliningrad problem until we feel that even those small restrictions which today exist for citizens’ transit travel and those restrictions which they are trying to impose on us regarding the transit of cargo... will be dully removed," Rogozin said. (RTR RUSSIA TV, 1600 GMT, 24 Aug 03; BBC Monitoring via Lexis-Nexis)

It is this preoccupation with the past -- a well-trodden plank in the communist platform — which makes the creation of the election bloc so suspect. Rogozin and Glazyev repeatedly have issued calls for the Communist Party to join, which Zyuganov and others (not surprisingly) have declined repeatedly. "We can't join this coalition!... If we join it, we would betray our voters, because we suspect that this coalition was created on the Kremlin’s orders, for the purpose of holding back the [KPRF]," explained Yuri Petrakov, a party representative. (KOMMERSANT, 25 Aug 03; WPS via Lexis-Nexis)

It is not inconceivable that the Kremlin did have a hand in the creation of the bloc, but apparently Moscow’s willingness to intervene in the election process, at least to support United Russia, is not wholehearted. In the regions, the Kremlin is seen as having schemed to keep United Russia from becoming too comfortable with its position of most-favored party. A new regional movement called New Russia has emerged in Tula, led by a provincial MP, Aleksei Berezin. The movement’s platform explicitly includes the goal of luring away at least 20 percent of United Russia’s current membership, as payback for United Russia’s refusal to support Berezin in the upcoming State Duma elections. Where does the Kremlin fit in this tale of revenge? Despite Berezin’s statements that the movement is supported by owners of small- and medium-sized businesses, rumors are rampant that the chief sponsor is a large state-owned oil company. (RUSSKY KURYER, 22 Jul 03; The Current Digest of the Post-Soviet Press, Vol. 55, No. 29 via Lexis-Nexis)
The Central Election Commission (CEC) is keeping its official eye on the election scene, though its effectiveness remains open to question. The commission certainly is devoting a substantial amount of time to media coverage; indeed, more attention seems to be spent on what is written about the process than on the process itself. To help earnest journalists navigate the tricky shoals of newly promulgated election-related legislation, the CEC is working on an informational brochure, "The Mass Media and the Elections; Questions and Answers." Touting such admirable principles as objective and accurate reporting, the publication assures the media that there is no prohibition on analyzing a candidate's pre-election activity as they inform voters, although successfully influencing voters by "purposefully and systematically creat[ing] a positive or negative attitude... toward candidates" is unacceptable. (ROSSIYSKAYA GAZETA, 21 Aug 03; Global News Wire; via World News Connection via Lexis-Nexis)

That is not the only training the CEC is offering, however. The Commission’s Russian Center for the Study of Election Technologies recently sent some reporters to a region where a gubernatorial campaign is underway, to note the success of election laws. Yet, while the laws apparently worked on the surface, a closer look revealed the continued circumvention of regulations, by such means as media manipulation, dishonest signature collections and underhanded, premature advertising. "Everything was done the way people do. Or rather, the way candidates do — people in fact are not paying nearly the close attention to what is happening that politicians would like," reporter Yekaterina Dobrynina explained. (ROSSIYSKAYA GAZETA, 28 Aug 03; FBIS-2003-0828 via World News Connection)

Interestingly, all this activity is playing out against a backdrop of anticipated voter apathy. There has been a steady increase in the number of voters selecting "against all," and at least one Moscow-based newspaper warns that a potential increase in that number could "squeeze United Russia from second place." (VREMYA MN, 12 Aug 03; Global Newswire; World News Connection via Lexis-
Of course, such a scenario is unlikely, though not impossible, particularly if recent polls are to be believed. The Regional Politics Research Agency, a division of the ROMIR Monitoring agency, recently released the results of a poll of residents in 32 Russian regions. When asked who holds real power in the country, most respondents (37 percent) indicated their belief that oligarchs, not politicians, are in charge; only 4 percent responded that the Duma held the real power. (VEDOMOSTI, 27 Aug 03; WPS via Lexis-Nexis)

JUDICIARY

It’s my party, and I’ll try what I want to

The Constitutional Court recently demonstrated its own brand of independence from the Kremlin, by removing a powerful tool the federal government had used to keep rebellious (and, possibly, independence-leaning) regions in line. The court ruled that the attempts by the prosecutor’s office to seek decisions from general courts on the constitutionality of regional laws were themselves unconstitutional. Only the Constitutional Court gets to decide that (which is probably why it’s called the Constitutional Court). Still, the folks in Tatarstan and Bashkortostan, the most visible targets of the prosecutor-general’s office in this regard, should not plan victory rallies anytime soon. The decision does not necessarily invalidate earlier general court rulings that, in the main, supported federal attempts to overhaul regional legislation which provided for any degree of autonomy. It does, however, offer those regions, and the rest of the Russian Federation, the opportunity to appeal the rulings. (KOMMERSANT, 19 Jul 03; Current Digest of the Post-Soviet Press via Lexis-Nexis)

The prosecutor’s office had more success in another ruling, the conviction on charges of libel of journalist and politician German Galkin from Chelyabinsk. The ruling was most surprising in its sentence: While previously such convictions ended with a fine or, at most, a suspended sentence, Galkin faces one year of corrective labor in a prison colony. He was found guilty of libel for a series of articles which implied that Chelyabinsk Vice Governor Konstantin Bochkarev was
a pedophile and that Bochkarev, as well as Vice Governor Andrei Kosilov, were guilty of professional criminal activity. "Galkin accused me and my colleague of having committed a whole range of especially serious crimes — participation in an organized crime grouping, serving the interests of the narcotics mafia, embezzlement of budget funds, paying off officials, organizing murders for hire, creating financial pyramids...," Kosilov said. (IZVESTIYA, 20 Aug 03; Global News Wire; World News Connection via Lexis-Nexis) While Glakin denies he wrote the articles, evidence indicates he was, at least, one of the persons who edited the publication.

It may be premature, however, to assume that the Galkin sentence signals a hardening of judicial attitudes towards the media, given the political nature of the publication in question as well as the types of accusations contained in the articles. Still, the severity of the sentence and the charges brought against Galkin, for articles whose authorship cannot be proved, guarantee that the media, and media analysts, will be watching the situation carefully.

**Russian Federation: Armed Forces**

By Lt. Col. Kris Beasly and Paul Lyons

**Bosnia, Kosovo…next stop, Iraq?**

Keeping his eye fixed firmly on the long-term goal of ensuring a Russian role as a major world player, President Putin may soon send Russian units to join the U.S., U.K., Poland and others in Iraq. (RFE/RL Security and Foreign Policy in Russia, 9 Sep 03)

Almost daily since late August, Russian officials have dropped hints about their willingness to reconsider the Iraqi issue and perhaps contribute an (as yet undefined) number of troops to the task of occupation and reconstruction. (AFP via Lexis-Nexis, 9 Sep 03; and various RFE/RL Newslines 27 Aug to 9 Sep 03)
One condition mentioned consistently is the need for Russian elements to operate under a "UN mandate" – depending on the outcome of negotiations sponsored by UN. Secretary-General Kofi Annan, this may be as modest as a new UN Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) for "cover" or, if France and Germany supported by Russia and China can prevail over the U.S. and U.K., it may mean an entirely new political and "peacekeeping" structure. (Reuters via RFE/RL, 5 Sep 03) In fact, US Secretary of State Colin Powell will meet this weekend with Annan and the foreign ministers from the five members of the UN Security Council to discuss the issue. (AFP via Lexis-Nexis, 9 Sep 03)

Russia's consideration of these possibilities entails evolution of the previous opposition to the war, and may mean a Russian approach separate from that of Germany and France, its earlier partners. All three still want the UN to play a major role but, Russia is hinting that it may settle for a U.S. General in charge of military forces in Iraq, as well as the U.S.-appointed administrator and Governing Council. (AFP, 9 Sep 03 via Lexis-Nexis; and RFE/RL Newsline, 5 Sep 03) The adjustment in the Russian approach was signalled during a press conference with Italian Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi in Sardinia on 30 August, when President Vladimir Putin said he "sees nothing wrong if [a peacekeeping contingent] is under U.S. command." (RFE/RL Newsline, 8 Sep 03)

Russia may have picked up on a shift in U.S. thinking as policymakers began to explore the idea of expanding the number of multi-national troops on the ground, both to make the military presence more palatable to Iraqis and to reduce the strain on limited American military resources, allowing the armed services to regroup and prepare for future operations in the war on terror. (ITAR-TASS, 23 Aug 03; FBIS-SOV-2003-0823 via World News Connection) This adjustment of U.S. policy, includes a draft UNSCR that, irrespective of its final form, will allow the UN, i.e. the permanent members of the Security Council, a larger role. This adjustment was signaled in President Bush's speech to the nation on 7 Sep 03. (www.ap.org, 7 Sep 03)
In mid-August, Russian officials began to hedge their bets and start evaluating the benefits of joining the multi-national coalition in Iraq, as intimations of the possible adjustment in U.S. policy became known. The considerations involved in Russia's reevaluation may have included the desire for at least a portion of Russia's long-term influence in Iraq, including the ability to recover eventually part of the debt Iraq owes Moscow, and the hope of "scoring points" in Washington by adopting a line distinct from the approach of the Berlin-Paris Axis. Colonel General Vladimir Kulakov, a member of the Federation Council, referring to Russia's major political and commercial interests in Iraq and throughout the area pointed out that they could be best served by Russia contributing a large force to the stabilization and reconstruction effort in Iraq. He added, "Iraq owes us $8 billion. In addition, we have traditionally had strong economic ties to this country. Our oil and construction companies are hoping to resume them not in the distant, but in the very near, future." (emphasis added) Although he called for Russia to insist on a UN peacekeeping operation, the latest American draft UN Security Council Resolution may help to serve as political cover. (Trud, 27 Aug 03; FBIS-NES-2003-0827 via World News Connection)

**What are the options?**

In Bosnia (1995) and Kosovo (1999), the Russian Federation attempted to establish itself as a supporter both of its Slav "kin" in the Balkans and of the "new world order." At the time, economics and a seriously debilitated military (not to mention the fact that, in Kosovo, Russia's entry was unilateral and surreptitious), meant sending on a small force to each operation, and in both cases, the Russian forces proved competent, though not outstanding, at their task. Moreover, they established a reputation for not being entirely neutral.

If really willing, Russia could make a positive contribution in view of an improving economy. Russia may be able to dispatch a division-level headquarters element and at least one, possibly two, brigades of combat troops, plus a significant force
of military police and engineers, medical and support troops. No doubt such a deployment would come at a cost in lives and money, but if done well, the Russian armed forces could gain from taking part in the rebuilding of Iraq and by working on a larger scale with western forces. However, given the current readiness and training of Russian troops, this may not be feasible and some sources have intimated an aversion to sending combat elements, even if some forces are sent.

The bottom line
The world has changed since the late 1990’s and Russia's place in the world has shifted as well. Mr. Putin certainly has grand ambitions, specifically reestablishing Russia as a major power, and possibly a superpower. He has worked deliberately and systematically with many secondary powers to stymie US efforts around the world.

Certainly Russia recognizes the fact that most former Warsaw Pact members, notably Poland, as well as some former republics of the USSR, such as Ukraine, currently are members of the coalition, and reaping the benefits, both political and economic. Russia has gleaned all the political benefits it can from its anti-war stance and has much to gain now by moving beyond that posture and into a stance of engagement in Iraq, under the UN flag or not.

The thoughts and opinions expressed in this article are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the official position of the Dept of Defense or the United States government.

NAVY

Blue Water Aspirations and Cooperative Footprints
On August 27, the Russian Navy concluded its participation in the Far East Command Post Exercise (CPX). Marking a departure from the trend of operations since the fall of communism and an end to the Cold War era, the Far
East exercise and recent deployments to the Indian Ocean and Mediterranean Sea bolster what some may deem as an ideological and doctrinal reversion to a prominent tenet of Soviet Cold War diplomacy - a naval doctrine characterized by deterrence and engagement on the world's oceans.

Although under the guise of mutual cooperation and joint compatibility, the Far East Command Post Exercise was yet another in a series of recent deployments and multilateral maneuvers in which the Russian Navy has engaged throughout 2003 that signify a return to a blue water focus and competency. Furthermore, the Far East exercise succinctly demonstrated the multifaceted arena in which Russia's contemporary Navy is asked to navigate; defense against terrorism and economic threats near shore as well as projecting global power afar. Chief of the Main Headquarters of the Russian Navy, Viktor Kravchenko referred to the recently concluded Far East exercise as "unprecedented in the history of the national navy as to the scale, the composition of participants and the space encompassed by the exercise." (ITAR-TASS; 18 Aug 03 via Lexis-Nexis)

Incorporating over 15 federal executive agencies, all branches of the Russian armed forces and multilateral participation with Asian-Pacific nations including the United States, it correlates with other highly visible deployments and naval "firsts" seen in 2003. For the first time in Russian history, cooperative naval exercises with the Indian Navy in the Indian Ocean were conducted recently as well as pioneering exercises founded by direct engagement with the French submarine force. These "forward leaning" events depict a developing naval doctrine with global aspirations and an adjunct desire for joint compatibility with disparate countries. In aggregate, the pace of operations, exercises and integrated forums with which the Russian Navy has engaged governments and intra-state agencies alike is unprecedented in recent history and consistent with the mantra voiced by Admiral of the Fleet Vladimir Kuroyedov, Commander-in Chief of the Russian Navy.
Admiral Kuroyedov's comments in a interview with Izvestiya (29 Jul 03; BBC Worldwide Monitoring via Lexis-Nexis) depict not only a redefinition of naval doctrine to suit the modern post-Soviet era, but perhaps the genesis of a doctrine to suit the complex economic, strategic, national and diplomatic issues that confront modern Russia. Against the backdrop of the Command Post Exercise of the Russian Pacific Fleet Admiral Kuroyedov stated that, "Today's challenges dictate to us the necessity not only of visiting another state under our own flag, but carrying out specific missions." In addition, he succinctly illustrated the impetus for exercises such as the Far East CPX and out of area deployments by stating, "Russia does not need coastal or oceanic fleets. Russia needs a multipurpose fleet in order to ensure its national security along the coast and defend its interest in any zone of the world's oceans." (NEZAVISIMAYA GAZETA, 29 Aug 03; What the Papers Say (WPS) via Lexis-Nexis) The Pacific Fleet's Far East exercise gave credence to Admiral Kuroyedov's concept of reconstituting Russia's Navy into a multi-functional force — both in scope and magnitude — aiming at "perfecting security measures, protecting the country's economic interests and teaming up law-enforcement bodies and the civilian population in fighting terrorism." (ITAR-TASS, 15 Aug 03 via Lexis-Nexis). Given the diverse range of participants from Canada, China, South Korea, Japan and the United States, the Far East exercise was said to have provided a forum for "the strengthening of mutual trust and cooperation in the interests of security of the whole region." (ITAR-TASS, 15 Aug 03 via Lexis-Nexis)

Kuroyedov's emphasis on the reshaping of Russian naval doctrine and the high profile deployments of 2003 are consistent with the naval and military doctrinal priorities of President Putin and Russian Defense Minister Ivanov. During a state visit to Italy, President Putin was explicit in his dissatisfaction with the current combat-readiness levels of the modern Russian Navy, stating, "a perennially moored navy loses combat capability, and a situation like that is senseless and intolerable." (ITAR-TASS; 30 Aug 03 via Lexis-Nexis) Putin used the high profile deployment of three ships from the Black Sea Fleet to Sicily as a forum to
showcase his philosophy and his aspirations of regaining the "clout" that the Russian Navy once held on the world's oceans. He also hosted Italian Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi on the Russian missile cruiser Moskva during his state visit. The three ships of the Black Sea Fleet will visit Greece on their return voyage while one of their sister-ships recently concluded participation in the latest naval exercise of the Black Sea Naval Cooperation Task Group (BLACKSEAFOR) of which Russia has been a member since 2001 with Bulgaria, Georgia, Romania, Turkey and Ukraine.

According to several accounts, Defense Minister Ivanov shares President Putin's dissatisfaction with the Navy's readiness and proficiency levels in carrying out the precepts of the naval doctrine vital to meeting Russia's defensive, economic and diplomatic concerns. Defense Minister Ivanov was quoted by the Interfax News Agency as saying that "we are going to do everything so that the departure of ships to the sea isn't a special occasion, but becomes a regular occurrence." (Associated Press Worldstream, 20 Aug 03 via Lexis-Nexis) That said, it's clear that Commander in Chief of the Russian Navy and Admiral of the Fleet Kuroyedov has to maneuver among a sea of considerable diplomatic and political pressures while attempting to reconstitute the Navy to it's once capable form. To complicate the landscape even further, Admiral Kuroyedov must do so with limited resources, an aging fleet and modest modernization plans that exclude construction accounts for aircraft carriers or submarines in excess of 12,000 tons. Clearly, the loss of the submarine K-159 in recent days tempers the collective successes that the Navy has otherwise claimed this year.

With the task at hand, it is clear that the Russian Navy has had a productive year. "When the first half of the training year is over, forces of the two Russian fleets accomplished a mission in the Indian Ocean...a major exercise of two fleets took place in the Baltic Sea in midsummer...Russian naval forces participated in several international exercises including the Russian-French exercises in the Norwegian Sea, Fairway of Peace'2003, BALTOPS'2003 (and)
Indra'2003. (WPS-Defense and Security, 16 Aug 03 via ISI Emerging Markets Database) The recently concluded Far East Command Post Exercise, high profile deployments and the multilateral exercises with the Indian and French navies demonstrate that the Russian Navy is focused on regaining the blue water footprint that once was a hallmark of the Russian naval fleet – and doing so in concert with it's coordinated defensive efforts at home.

Newly Independent States: Caucasus
By Ariela Shapiro

GEORGIA
Out go the Americans, out go the lights
On September 2, hundreds of residents in the Georgian Marneuli region blocked the central highway linking Eastern Georgia with Tbilisi. The protesters demanded the return of the electricity supply to the region after being without power for a week. (ITAR-TASS, 2 Sep 03; FBIS-SOV-2003-0902 via World News Connection) These events coincide with the RAO UES (Russia’s joint-stock power company United Energy Systems) acquisition of 75% of the shares in the Tbilisi power systems from the American-held AES company. RAO UES also acquired the rights to manage Khrami-1 and Khrami-2 hydropower stations, 100% of the shares of Mtkvari nuclear power station and 50% of the shares of Transenergy nuclear power plant. (Financial Times, 4 Sep 03 via Lexis-Nexis)

At a press conference held on August 25, Georgian President Eduard Shevardnadze informed journalists that, "there was nothing unusual" about the UES monopoly and that he and UES CEO Anatoli Chubais had decided that the company’s role in Georgia would be relegated to "purely economic interests." (Interfax, 25 Aug 03; FBIS-SOV-2003-0825 via World News Connection)
Adding salt to the wound, the U.S. Ambassador to Georgia, Richard Miles, spoke on Georgian Rustavi-2 TV on August 16 and called on the Georgians to think in "a little bit more modern way." He denied that the relationship between Georgia and the U.S. had worsened and that the departure of the U.S. company AES, formerly seen as "the flagship of American investment" in Georgia, was political in nature. Rather, the deal was solely a commercial venture that was cancelled because the company was not recouping its investment and hardly recovering its daily operational costs. (Financial Times Information, 16 Aug 03 via Lexis-Nexis)

In a startling reversal, Shevardnadze announced on September 1 that Georgian authorities are ready to assist Russia in repatriating Chechen refugees from the Pankisi Gorge. (Financial Times, 1 Sep 03 via Lexis-Nexis) In a meeting with the Russian delegation led by the Minister for Chechnya, Stanislav Ilyasov, Shevardnadze said that Russia was ready for the return of all the Chechen refugees to their republic and would "create conditions for their life and work" which include housing and unemployment allowances for those unable to find work. At present, about 3,800 Chechen refugees (according to Russian sources) are living in Georgia’s Pankisi Gorge. (ITAR-TASS, 1 Sep 03; FBIS-SOV-2003-0901 via World News Connection) This announcement comes on the heels of Georgia's National Security Council announcement of support for the decision of the U.N. Security Council Committee to include Chechen warlord Shamil Basaev in the Consolidated List of Sanctions known as the "black list." (ITAR-TASS, 30 Aug 03; FBIS-SOV-2003-0830 via World News Connection) Not coincidentally, units of the Russian North Caucasus-based troops will begin to aid Georgian border guards at the Argun section to guard the Chechen section of the Russian-Georgian frontier, Deputy Head of the Russian Border Guard Service Colonel General Mansur Valiyev claimed in an interview with Itar-Tass. (1 Sep 03; FBIS-SOV-2003-0901 via World News Connection)

Also notable, Shevardenadze will not be able to participate in the general debate at the 58th session of the United Nations General Assembly this September. The
deputy press secretary of the Georgian president, Bondo Mdzinarishvili, told journalists that Shevardnadze was not going to New York because of a lack of funds. (KAVKASIA-PRESS, 2 Sep 03; FBIS-SOV-2003-0902 via World News Connection) Lack of funds or lack of support from the United States?

**Electricity is not the only thing failing in Georgia...**

The recent failure in the Georgian parliament, on both August 15 and 26, to endorse needed budget cuts may mask a newly emerging tug-of-war between the Shevardnadze government and a recently-formed opposition bloc known as the Burdjanadze-Democrats. The Georgian parliament was supposed to ratify budget sequestrers proposed by the government in response to demands made in early July by a visiting International Monetary Fund (IMF) delegation. (ITAR-TASS, 16 and 27 Aug 03; FBIS-SOV-2003-0816 and FBIS-SOV-2003-0827 via World News Connection) The fund had made disbursement of the third and final installment of a Poverty Reduction and Growth Facility loan contingent on sweeping budget cuts, passage of a new Tax Code, and the abolition of cuts in electricity tariffs. (ITAR-TASS, 26 Aug 03; FBIS-SOV-2003-0826 via World News Connection)

Minister of State, Avtandil Djorbenadze, who came to parliament to brief deputies on the planned budget cuts, blamed speaker Nino Burdjanadze for the legislature’s failure to ensure the government met the IMF deadline of mid-August. Burdjanadze, who on August 21 formally announced the creation of his eponymous new opposition bloc, the Burdjanadze-Democrats (ITAR-TASS, 22 Aug 03), responded to these allegations by stating that the proposed cuts will be approved only if the government acknowledges responsibility for the budget shortfall and resigns. In addition, the President of the National Bank of Georgia, Irakliy Managadze, informed journalists on August 21 that Georgia was on the verge of announcing a default. (ITAR-TASS, 21 Aug 03; FBIS-SOV-2003-0821 via World News Connection) However, in the midst of this financial crisis, State Minister Djorbenadze announced on August 23 that he had secured IMF support
for a debt-restructuring deal with the Paris Club at a meeting with Jonathan Dunn, the IMF's representative in Georgia. (Financial Times, 28 Aug 03 via Lexis-Nexis) Georgia's foreign debt currently stands at $1.75 billion, or 47 percent of the country's GDP. (ITAR-TASS, 21 Aug 03; FBIS-SOV-2003 via World News Connection)

ARMENIA

Relations with Greece expanded further
At the end of a three-day official visit to Armenia, General Georgios Antonakopoulos, the Greek Army's chief of staff, announced on September 3 that Greece would increase its military assistance to Armenia. (Noyan Tapan, 04 Sep 03; FBIS-SOV-2003-0904 via World News Connection) Antonakopoulos signed a new memorandum of understanding with his Armenian counterpart, Deputy Defense Minister General Mikael Harutiunian, and agreed to expand bilateral military cooperation with the completion of a more detailed cooperation plan by November. According to the agreement, Armenia will deploy a 30-man unit of troops for peacekeeping duties under the command of Greek forces in Kosovo. (Yerevan Mediamax 3 Sep 03; FBIS-SOV-2003-0903 via World News Connection)

Armenia and the CIS

AZERBAIJAN
Let the games begin…
On August 22, Azerbaijan's official press published a list of presidential candidates registered by the Central Election Commission. (Interfax, 22 Aug 03; FBIS-SOV-2003-0822 via World News Connection) Of the 12 candidates listed (see full list below), 7 are considered to be serious competitors: (spite illness) incumbent President Heydar Aliyev, nominated by the ruling Yeni Azerbaijan party; Prime Minister Ilham Aliyev, nominated by a group of citizens in the Nakhichevan exclave; Isa Gambar, nominated by the Musavat party; Ilyas Ismailov, nominated by a Popular Front group; Etibar Mamedov, nominated by the National Independence Party; Hafiz Hajiyev, nominated by the Muasir Musavat party; and Ali Kerimli, nominated by Azerbaijan’s Popular Front. Campaigning began on August 16 and will finish on October 14, with the first round of elections scheduled to take place on October 15, 2003. A candidate must gain 65% of the vote during the first round of elections to avoid a run-off.

CHECHNYA
Democracy — Russian style
The Russian sponsored and organized elections in Chechnya seem, at best, to be a mechanism to guarantee Russian control in the North Caucasus, while further undermining the authority of the (anti-Moscow) Chechen President Aslan Maskhadov.

On August 20, Russian presidential aide Sergei Yastrzhembsky told Interfax that the upcoming presidential elections in Chechnya will make the regime of Aslan Maskhadov absolutely irrelevant to indigenous Chechens and to international observers present for the elections. (INTERFAX, 20 Aug 03; FBIS-SOV-2003-0820 via World News Connection) According to Yastrzhembsky, the Chechen Elections Committee has sent invitations to about two hundred members of international organizations, including the US Federal Election Commission, through the Russian Central Elections Committee (CEC) with Foreign Ministry assistance. (ITAR-TASS 20 Aug 03 and Interfax 22 Aug 03; FBIS-SOV-2003-
Once the Chechen Elections Committee had announced the first, incomplete list of presidential candidates to run in the October 5 presidential election, the spokesman for the federal troops in the North Caucasus, Colonel Ilya Shabalkin supplied Moscow with another reason to pour troops into Chechnya: purportedly, three million dollars have come from abroad to Aslan Maskhadov and Arab mercenary Abu Walid for the purpose of "wrecking" the presidential elections. In response, special units of the 42nd Division have begun training to "ensure security of the presidential elections." (ITAR-TASS, 20 Aug 03; FBIS-SOV-2003-0820 via World News Connection) On August 25, the CEC requested the FSB and the Interior Ministry to ensure the security of presidential candidates in Chechnya. Inevitably, this will lead to an increase in the ranks of the FSB's protégé in Chechnya, the Chechen Security Police, which is headed by Ramzan Kadyrov, son of the incumbent (Moscow-installed) presidential candidate Akhmat Kadyrov. (ITAR-TASS, 22 Aug 03; FBIS-2003-0822 via World News Connection; and Washington Post 25 Aug 03 via Lexis-Nexis) At present, Kadyrov's force in Chechnya has grown to several thousand. (NOVAYA GAZETA, 28 Aug 03; What the Papers Say via Lexis-Nexis) An increase of FSB presence in Chechnya, via the Chechen Security Police, will further serve to exacerbate the already tense relationship between the FSB and the GRU units stationed in Chechnya.

(Additionally, ITAR-TASS reported on 27 August that the Interior Ministry of Chechnya in Grozny announced that over 8,000 staffers of various "power" services will be present to ensure security during the presidential elections in Chechnya. The department affiliation of these "civil servants" is not available.)

**Newly Independent States: Central Asia**

By David Montgomery

*Advancing the SCO and the Outsiders in Central Asia*
The recent meeting of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) constitutes another step towards formalizing relations between the states of Central Asia and countries with a keen interest in the region. While working under the umbrella of fighting terrorism and rendering legal cooperation more fluid, both China and Russia hope to make the SCO an effective organization that counteracts the influence of the American presence in the region. Furthermore, China and Russia have extended to Tajikistan and Uzbekistan their attempts to improve relations and be more active partners along the Afghan border.

From 4-5 September 2003, the foreign ministers of China, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Russia, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan met in Tashkent, to discuss the implementation of agreements that emerged from the May SCO meeting in Moscow. While the original purpose of the organization was to resolve Sino-Soviet (Russian) border disputes, the agenda has expanded to include more general threats to the member states regarding issues such as trafficking in weapons and drugs, organized crime, religious extremism, separatism, and terrorism. (RFE/RL, 5 Sep 03 via www.rferl.org; KABAR, 0618 GMT, 4 Sep 03; FBIS-SOV-2003-0904 via World News Connection) Steps are also being taken to improve economic relations between the SCO member states; a possible reduction of trade barriers will be taken up at meetings later in the month.

Though the recent gatherings focused largely on combining efforts in the fight against terrorism, there was also an underlying political tone in the developments. The planned SCO Regional Anti-terrorism Center was to be sited in Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan, a location that was agreed upon by SCO members at the May meetings. In an effort to improve relations with Uzbekistan, Russia lobbied to have the location of the Regional Anti-terrorism Center switched to Tashkent. (RFE/RL, 5 Sep 03, via www.rferl.org) There is no doubt that Russia’s close relations with Kyrgyzstan influenced the latter’s acceptance of the location change, but it is not clear that Uzbekistan will be won over that easily.
While Uzbek President Islam Karimov, in his 1 September address to parliament, remarked on the importance of relations with Russia — especially as a trading partner — Karimov also indicated that support for Russia did not imply that Uzbekistan was "drifting toward Russia" and away from the U.S. (RFE/RL, 4 Sep 03, via www.rferl.org). Rather, Uzbekistan realizes the practicality of being courted both by Russia and the U.S. and moving the Regional Anti-terrorism Center to Tashkent is but one reward for its independent streak.

Tajik President Emomali Rakhmonov, who referred to the SCO as a "factor of stability in the region, an influential factor in regional and world policy," (ITAR-TASS, 0830 GMT, 2 Sep 03; FBIS-SOV-2003-0902 via World News Connection) has welcomed both Russian and Chinese involvement along the borders. For many years, the Russian Army has assisted Tajikistan in guarding its borders and recent exercises affirmed the closeness of that relationship. (ITAR-TASS, 0507 GMT, 4 Sep 03; FBIS-SOV-2003-0904 via World News Connection) The relationship between China and Tajikistan, however, is improving on a more formal level.

China’s Foreign Minister Li Zhaoxing visited Tajikistan from 1-2 September, where he met with Rakhmonov and others. The result of the visit was a joint communiqué that seemed intended to satisfy the wishes of both countries. Tajikistan, for example, affirmed its support for "one China" and pledged that it would not establish official relations with Taiwan. China, for its part, stated that it would support Tajikistan in its efforts to consolidate national independence. (XINHUA, 1006 GMT, 3 Sep 03; FBIS-CHI-2003-0903 via World News Connection) Both countries came to an agreement on border checkpoints and reiterated that the coordination of efforts against terrorism and extremism should be managed through the SCO. (XINHUA, 1422 GMT, 2 Sep 03; FBIS-CHI-2003-0902; also ITAR-TASS, 1802 GMT, 2 Sep 03; FBIS-SOV-2003-0902 via World News Connection)
There appears to be a desire to use the SCO to strengthen the cooperation among member countries and to create a regional hegemonic block. The SCO is one way that China and Russia can be actively involved participants influencing the policies of Central Asian states. While India and Pakistan are rumored to have some interest in joining the SCO, there have been no formal requests. Though membership to the SCO is technically open, it is unlikely that the U.S. would request membership. And the unlikeliness of that request may strengthen Chinese and Russian commitment to the organization.

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