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Russian Federation: Executive Branch

By Susan Cavan

Another ideological father speaks…. There have been many claimants to the seat behind the throne over the years: Burbulis, Shakhrai, Skokov, Filatov, Korzhakov, Pavlovsky and Voloshin or Sechin and Ivanov. One name stands out however, both for his longevity in the shifting circles of power and for his pretense to the mantle of defender of democracy. His name is nearly synonymous with Russian privatization, from his appointment as Head of the State Property Committee in the time of the 'Young Turks' to his stewardship of the 'Loans for shares' program to the post of Chief of Staff for a 'colossally fatigued' Head of State, Anatoli Chubais, in the Putin regime, has taken on the chimera of privatization of Russian utilities, in the guise of heading up Russia's UES. In Chubais' hands, UES may manage to implement, perhaps more effectively than any military or demographic subterfuge, the tightest reweaving of the states of the Former Soviet Union since the weft was rent in the Belovezhskaya Pushcha.

The Russian energy supplier has recently moved to expand its hegemony over southern states of the FSU, notably Georgia and Armenia. (See N.I.S. Observed, Caucasus, 10 and 24 Sep 03) Chubais and this new tack have been lauded by his fellow 'reformers' and political party compatriots as potentially potent unifying forces. As Boris Nemtsov noted, certainly with the upcoming elections in mind, "[T]he Georgian electricity generation system has been purchased, and apparently others across post-Soviet territory will be purchased as well. Chubais, who is called the destroyer of the nation, has actually turned out to be its integrator." (YEZHENEDELNYI ZHURNAL, 8 Sep 03; What the Papers Say, 15 Sep 03 via Lexis-Nexis)
Chubais as integrator seems a stretch, although admittedly, he has had a remarkably tough row to hoe in his chosen path. He fought for the sale of state-owned property when private property was still a disreputable proposition in most quarters; he dealt with the most vicious of the nascent oligarchs in the share auctions, only to find they were "stealing everything." He fought the combined will of the Heads of the Security Services and the Kremlin Guards as well as the dreaded presidential tennis instructor to 'protect' democratic choice through elections in 1996. But he did manage to enjoy unprecedented access to the White House and the Clinton administration's policy makers, a guaranteed rapt forum annually at Davos, and to wield the power of the Presidency for an ailing Yeltsin following the 1996 election. After this roller coaster ride of a career, where has Chubais finally alit, ideologically?

**Liberal Imperialism**

According to Chubais, the end of the 20th Century was a time for Russia to face some hard facts: "The fight with the West has ended. They pushed us off the pedestal, we were falling from a great height for a long time, we tumbled down and almost broke our spines." (NEZAVISIMAYA GAZETA, 1 Oct 03; What the Papers Say via Lexis-Nexis)

Now, proposes Chubais, "I think it is high time for us to call a spade a spade. Russia is the sole and unique leader in the CIS regarding the size of its economy and the standard of living of its citizens." (Ibid.)

"Liberal imperialism must become Russia's ideology, and the creation of a liberal empire must become Russia's mission. (...) I understand that the word "empire" was a swear-word in the 1980s and 1990s. (...) It was impossible to use this word together with such notions as "civilization," "democracy," "market," and "freedom." It was impossible in the 20th century. However, the 20th century has ended. Everywhere and forever." (Ibid.)
The main criteria of Chubais' definition of "liberal imperialism" include a determination not "to challenge the respect for territorial integrity of neighboring states;" and conducting inter-state relations within the bounds of international law; with the possible benefits of the protection of Russian minorities (and Russian speakers generally) in neighboring states, expanding business opportunities and "protecting democracy."

Chubais' Weltanschauung recognizes the limits of European integration for Russia: 
"[W]e do not need to join NATO or the European Union. Russia is too big for these structures from the economic, political and geographic points of view." What Anatoli Borisovich sees is a "strategic ring of great democracies" comprising "the U.S., united Europe, Japan and the Russian liberal empire." (Ibid.)

While Chubais' message is replete with campaign rhetoric on the need for social, military, and, of course, economic reform, the tract also has the feel of a well-pondered position paper. Leave it to Chubais to hit upon such a remarkable mix of Derzhava rhetoric blended with liberal-democratic sentiment just before the parliamentary (and presidential) elections. The problem with Chubais is that he won't leave the words to float in the air like a trial balloon. We know that at his direction, UES is acting on these principles already.

Russian Federation: Security Services

By Fabian Adami

FSB to monitor cell phone networks.
In the past two weeks, disturbing reports have indicated that the Federal Security Service may have begun to monitor cell phone conversations and SMS
messages in the Greater Moscow region, including the city itself. (WHAT THE PAPERS SAY (WPS) 30 Sept 03 via ISI Emerging Markets Database)

According to various sources, the FSB has created a "watch-list" of words and phrases, including "Putin," "Bomb," "Drug," and "Shakhid," which will raise red-flags, and lead to further investigation. (WPS-Russian Political Monitor, 1 Sept 03 via ISI Emerging Markets Database) Rossiya TV reported (WWW.RUTV.RU, 24 Sept 03; FBIS-SOV-2003-0925 via World News Connection) that "suspect messages will be entered into a database compiled by cell phone operators and handed over to special services agents." If taken at face value, these reports would seem to indicate that there are no safeguards to prevent serious potential abuses of the eavesdropping system.

Perhaps in anticipation of a negative reaction, and deep concern on the part of cell phone users, providers have been quick to respond: VympelKom, a leading provider, issued a statement by its Head of Public Relations, Mikhail Uvarov, stating that "every GSM Operator has a server where all messages are processed. Whenever necessary, the operator can trace any SMS message and its sender." Uvarov added the caveat that a court warrant would be required before any record could be passed on to the Security Services. (WPS, 30 Sept 03 via ISI Emerging Markets Database)

In support of this statement FSB spokesman Sergei Ignatchenko, emphasized that the Security Services would need to "provide evidence of criminal activities by the suspect," before gaining "access to private communications." (WPS, 30 Sept 03 via ISI Emerging Markets Database)

Two important details must be noted when assessing this explanation. First, the FSB does not have an impeccable record in terms of civil liberties and presenting evidence of criminal activity before making arrests; secondly, legislation passed as a result of the Moscow Theater siege, the suicide bombings in Tushino, and
the more recent attacks in Mozdok and Chechnya already allows the FSB "access to all cell phones in Moscow and the Moscow region." (WPS 30 Sept 03 via ISI Emerging Markets Database)

Interior Minister Boris Gryzlov’s statement in August (see NIS Observed, 12 September 2003), that legislation to enhance the authority of the Security Services would be forthcoming has proven remarkably prophetic. Upon which area of private citizens' lives will the FSB next intrude?

**New counter-terrorism unit begins operations**

A new undercover anti-terrorist unit has begun operations in Russia. Established as part of the MVD, the "T" Center’s task is to "combat terrorism, extremism, and abduction." (ROSSIYSKAYA GAZETA, 24 Sept 03, FBIS-SOV-2003-0928 via World News Connection)

According to an interview conducted with its chief, Yuri Demidov, the counter-terrorism body was created on the orders of MVD Chief Boris Gryzlov, and is supposedly one of the most covert entities of the Russian state security apparatus.

Demidov stated that the unit would specialize in carrying out investigations of terrorist acts, and that it would be working "in close contact" with its "colleagues at the Lubyanka." (ROSSIYSKAYA GAZETA, 24 Sept 03, FBIS-SOV-2003-0928 via World News Connection)

On the face of it, there seems to be little positive purpose in creating the new entity. If the FSB’s rumored takeover of the MVD is proven correct, then the only conclusion to be drawn is that the "T" Center will take much of the flak for failing to prevent any future terror attacks, leaving Putin’s beloved FSB itself with an "unblemished" record. On the other hand, if the MVD is still operating
independently, then the new unit represents merely the replication of authority by yet another body with unfettered powers to infringe citizens’ rights.

Russian Federation: Foreign Relations
By Scott Dullea

Kyoto: What does Russia fear?
Finally, Russia has a chance to take a leadership role in an international arena in which the United States is not present. It has the opportunity also to improve its reputation among European Union members and the prospect of making some cash. So why is Russia hesitating to ratify the Kyoto protocol when it could bring such benefits? After all, doesn't Russia claim concern about the planet’s ecological well-being — as reflected in its recent postponement of a multi-billion dollar oil pipeline deal with China over "environmental concerns" in the Lake Baikal area?

The participants of Kyoto, who maybe hoped that this was the case, were anxiously awaiting news at the 29 September — 3 October World Climate Change Conference in Moscow, that Russia indeed would ratify the protocol. Moscow’s participation is considered critical because Kyoto cannot enter into force until countries representing 55 percent of emissions have ratified it. Thus, Russia’s 17 percent share of emissions essentially gives Russia a veto over the environmental pact’s effectiveness. Last year Russian Prime Minister Mikhail Kasianov announced that Russia would ratify Kyoto in the "near future," but President Vladimir Putin’s statements disappointed conference attendees and the protocol-supporting governments which were counting on Russia to take the necessary steps to make Kyoto a reality.

In his speech at the conference Putin, less than tastefully, joked that perhaps global warming wasn’t such a bad thing since it might reduce the need to buy so
many fur coats. More seriously he expressed doubts about the science buttressing the claims that industrial pollution actually is the cause of global warming trends. Putin also left no doubt that the Russian economy was a part of his tendency to put aside the Kyoto agreement, calling for greater financial guarantees.

At first glance it may appear that Kyoto could be a good deal for Moscow; since Russia’s greenhouse gas emissions have decreased from the 1997 levels upon which the protocol is based, Russian industry, for the near- to mid-term, would not have to make any expensive changes to meet the treaty requirements. Thus, Moscow could sell its quota credits to other countries that are exceeding their quotas. Estimates of potential annual profits for Russia from such sales range from the Russian Energy Ministry’s conservative $500 million to $4 billion to The Financial Times’ $10 billion calculations. (30 Sep 03 via Johnson's Russia List (JRL) #7345, 30 Sep 03) Russia’s Deputy Prime Minister Alexei Gordeyev, however, stated that Russia is doubtful that there would necessarily be buyers for these credits, and that is why Moscow would insist on written guarantees before committing to the treaty. (DEUTSCHE WELLE, 29 Sep 03 via www.YubaNet.com, 30 Sep 03)

The Kremlin, however, may also have other, less immediate, concerns in mind. With the U.S. no longer active in the Kyoto protocol, and China, as a developing country not yet affected by Kyoto’s requirements, Russia could in the long-term, find itself at a disadvantage against these two competitors. (ITAR-TASS, 30 Sep 03 via JRL #7346, 1 Oct 03) Moreover, the Kremlin probably is concerned that Kyoto’s entry-into-force would drive down world energy prices by encouraging western countries to burn less fossil fuel. This could devastate Russia financially since, according to an August 2003 report from the World Bank, nearly half of Russia’s recent growth has been due simply to the rise in the price of oil. (THE TIMES, 25 Sep 03 via JRL #7337, 25 Sep 03) So, even after President Putin’s statements last week at the World Economic Forum in Moscow that Russia
would no longer rely solely on oil, (INTERFAX, 3 Oct 03 via JRL #7350, 3 Oct 03)
concern about the way in which Kyoto could affect prices has trumped what may
otherwise have been an economic and foreign relations coup for Russia.

Although the pact isn’t dead yet, Putin refused to set a date for ratification, stating
simply that Russia needs more time to study the plan. This has led to
accusations that Moscow is abusing the power it has over Kyoto and is playing
brinksmanship in order to gain leverage on the international scene, (THE
FINANCIAL TIMES, 30 Sep 03 via JRL #7345, 30 Sep 03) including, perhaps, in
regard to its pending entry to the World Trade Organization. Clearly, decision
making in the Kremlin, whether regarding Iraq, Iran, Europe, relations with the
U.S. or the world’s environmental status, continues to revolve around the effect
each issue may have on Russia’s number one source of wealth: energy. Just as
the environmental concerns holding up the oil deal with China may constitute a
convenient cover for deciding on which of two pipeline options offers Russia the
most profit, so, too, the stalling over Kyoto appears to be designed to ensure
maximum earnings for Moscow’s expanding oil market.

Russia and Poland launch new visa regime
Individual Russian citizens now are affected directly by the consequences of
having geographic neighbors that belong to the European Union (EU). Due to the
EU’s requirements, Poland has begun to require visas for Russian travelers as of
1 October 2003. The agreement between Moscow and Warsaw that was signed
on 18 September 2003, means that Polish travelers to Russia now will also be
required to have visas. That supplants the agreement on visa-free travel that had
been in place since 1979 between the two former Warsaw Pact states.

Generally, Russian officials are expressing understanding of the need for a visa
regime, which is unavoidable for Poland as a new EU member. However,
according to Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Sergei Razov, neither side is
enthusiastic about the change. (CHANNEL ONE TV MOSCOW, 1 Oct 03; BBC
Monitoring via ISI Emerging Markets Database) On the other hand, the intent of the new agreement is to help Europe as a whole keep out the drugs and other criminal activities that transit from Asia through Russia and into Europe. On 1 October, Poland also began similar visa regimes with its other non-EU neighbors: Ukraine and Belarus.

Moscow and Warsaw had been discussing the new visa requirements for most of the year and initially planned to introduce the new regime on 1 June 2003. However, Poland delayed its introduction, reportedly due to the complications that could have arisen during the peak summer travel season. Additionally, it was suggested that Russia might not have been ready logistically to implement the new system. (PAP NEWS AGENCY, 16 June 03; BBC Monitoring via ISI Emerging Markets Database)

The cost for Russians to purchase visas to Poland is 10, 16 and 50 Euros (for single, double and multi-entry visas, respectively). Free visas for the elderly, children and some students, teachers and business people are available under the new arrangements, that provides also for visas free of charge to residents of Kaliningrad Oblast. The agreement, being largely reciprocal, means that Poles desiring to travel to Kaliningrad also can obtain free visas.

In all probability the most immediate victims of the visa requirements will be the Russian entrepreneurs in Kaliningrad known as shuttle traders who have been exploiting the loose border controls to market their goods in Poland where better profits are to be made. With the new visa system in place, border and customs controls are tighter, and shuttle traders who are caught transporting undeclared goods stand to lose their visas. Polish officials reacted unsympathetically to complaints on this score, and the Polish consul-general in Kaliningrad, Jaroslaw Czubinski, stated that these traders have had plenty of time to find new jobs. (NTV MIR, 30 Sep 03; BBC Monitoring via ISI Emerging Markets Database)
The latest measures come at a time of relatively stable relations between Moscow and Warsaw. In December 2002 the Russian Ambassador to Poland Nikolai Afonsievsky declared that relations between the two countries "are now better than they have ever been." (ENGLISH.PRAVDA.RU, 20 Dec 02) Despite opposing positions on the Iraq war, Russian President Vladimir Putin and Polish President Aleksandr Kwasniewski met on a Russian missile cruiser in the Baltic Sea during joint naval exercises. Kwasniewski expressed his belief that Poland’s accession to the EU was promising for economic and social improvements in Kaliningrad. Putin promised that a Russian natural gas pipeline project planned for the Baltic seabed would not alter plans for the Yamal pipeline branch that is to be constructed across Poland.

Certainly, larger issues such as pipelines and energy sales outweigh the visa regime’s impact on the relatively small number of shuttle traders and other unfortunate individuals. That portion of Kaliningrad’s unofficial economy is dwarfed by Russia’s sales of energy to Poland which, according to the U.S. Department of Energy, obtains 54% of its natural gas and roughly 50% of its oil imports from the Russian Federation. This visa system is a necessary evil for Russia that comes with the reality of the European Union’s expansion. Russia has to become accustomed to that reality since such requirements will remain in place until Russia becomes a member of the Schengen Agreements — unlikely in the foreseeable future due to the difficulty of controlling the vast Russian borders with its Asian neighbors.

Russian Federation: Domestic Issues and Legislative Branch

By Kate Martin
The media and the oligarchs

Ignoring the fact that the state, not private business, controls Russia’s media, President Vladmir Putin claimed the mantel of defender of the free press during a meeting at Columbia University in New York last month. He pointed to the dangers posed by his favorite piñata, the oligarchs, as the major threat to journalism. "If they (the media) are monopolized by two or three money bags, it would mean the protection of corporate interests instead of freedom of press," he said. (ITAR-TASS, 2155 GMT, 25 Sep 03; FBIS-SOV-2003-0926 via World News Connection)

Given the state of the press in the Russian Federation, Putin's comments warrant investigation. Who is left to pose any sort of political threat to his regime? Well, there’s one oligarch who hasn’t been co-opted, imprisoned or pushed to the margins of power: Mikhail Khodorkovsky, who managed to avoid the government’s prosecutorial blitz against YUKOS this summer, does not seem to be in the pro-Putin camp. Worse still, he’s talking publicly about his concerns. "[T]heoretically you have a free press, but in practice there is self-censorship. Theoretically you have courts; in practice the courts adopt decisions dictated from above. Theoretically there are civil rights enshrined in the constitution; in practice you are not able to exercise some of these rights," he warned. [THE TIMES (LONDON), 18 Sep 03 via Lexis-Nexis] However, the businessman was quick to point out that he blames not Prime Minister Mikhail Kasianov nor Putin, but the security agencies, for the abrogation of rights. This is somewhat disingenuous, given that the latitude enjoyed by the security agencies did not fall like manna from heaven, but rather like manna from the Kremlin. Moreover, he’s putting his money where his mouth is, supporting the liberal/free market parties YABLOKO and Union of Right Forces.

Government attempts to silence another noisy oligarch, Boris Berezovsky, have met with mixed success. (THE NIS OBSERVED, 24 Sep 03) Meanwhile, oligarch and one-time media mogul Vladimir Gusinsky still awaits an Athens Court of
Appeal decision regarding his possible extradition to Russia on charges of money-laundering. (ITAR-TASS, 1641 GMT, 25 Sep 03; FBIS-SOV-2003-0926 via World News Connection) His case has been continued until mid-October as Greek authorities request additional information from Russia. Prosecutor Anna Zairi, recommending against the extradition request, noted that the fraud charges against Gusinsky were too vague. (AGENCE FRANCE PRESSE, 29 Sep 03 via Lexis-Nexis)

Clearly hoping to tap the oligarch baton to aid their own political endeavors, some parties are supporting Putin’s claims that society is in peril. Indeed, voters run the risk of being bludgeoned with the threat. Dmitri Rogozin, in explaining the goals of his recently formed electoral bloc with Sergei Glazyev, noted that a "narrow group of self-interested people have the economy in their hands and dictate to us how we should live. The oligarchs are our enemy." (Global News Wire, 14 Sep 03; World News Connection via Lexis-Nexis) Moreover, the recently formed bloc of the Social Justice Party and the Pensioners’ Party declared: "We will aid the president in the struggle against the oligarchs...." (ROSSIYSKAYA GAZETA, 17 Sep 03; FBIS-SOV-2003-0917 via World News Connection) Well, the media would have been breathing a huge sigh of relief, if only the state hadn’t already pulled the plug on the respirator.

REGIONS
Not in our back yard, but maybe in yours

While insinuating that states in which ethnic Russians reside should pay attention to demographics, authorities in Moscow and elsewhere in the Russian Federation are keeping a close eye on incoming migrants. It does not appear as though immigrants will be enjoying much support from the authorities.

First Deputy Foreign Minister Eleonara Mitrofanova noted that, with more than 25 million ethnic Russians living outside the Russian Federation, the community is second in size only to the Chinese diaspora. Attending the World Congress of the
Russian Press, she claimed that persecution of Russian speakers continues in Ukraine and the Baltic states (despite repeated rejections of such claims in the international arena). However, she did see cause for optimism. "The life of our compatriots abroad will be getting easier as long as Russia is getting stronger," she said. (ITAR-TASS, 1122 GMT, 20 Sep 03; FBIS-SOV-2003-0920 via World News Connection)

Meanwhile, the lives of non-ethnic Russians are unlikely to improve within the confines of the Federation. According to Viktor Ozerov, chairman of the Federation Council’s committee on defense and security, the wave of migration into Russia is a major problem threatening both social stability and state security. (INTERFAX-AVN, 0902 GMT, 2 Oct 03 via Lexis-Nexis) Krasnodar Kray is one of the more popular destinations, it appears, a fact that does not thrill local authorities.

Indeed, in the face of three 25 August bombings that killed 4 persons and injured 20 others in Krasnodar, the kray administration has tightened its passport regime. Governor Aleksandr Tkachev denies media charges that the restrictions amount to a witch-hunt based on ethnicity. "The scoundrels who stirred up this bloody mess came to our kray from outside. We have declared war on illegal migration, which has always been a nutrient medium for crime. Honest people, those who came to Kuban with good intentions, have nothing to fear," he said. (ROSSIYSKAYA GAZETA, 18 Sep 03; FBIS-SOV-2003-0918 via World News Connection)

And yet, maybe they do have something to fear, since Tkachev seems intent on making the atmosphere in Krasnodar inhospitable even to legal migrants. Discounting allegations that he is "a xenophobe and a nationalist," he explains that he has to be wary. "The demographic situation is alarming. With every passing year, the size of the native population of Kuban-Russians, Adygey — is declining, and there are fewer Ukrainians and Belarussians. At the same time,
the number of Armenians has increased by 38 percent, of Kurds — by 85 percent, or Assyrians — by 64 percent, and of Georgians — by 43 percent... If this situation continues, then in another 10 years the ethnic make-up of the kray will radically change, and with the slightest destabilization of the situation, Kuban may become another Chechnya," he said. (Ibid.) Two "main participants" in the series of bombings were arrested on 2 October, police said. (ITAR-TASS-1823 GMT, 2 Oct 03 via Lexis-Nexis) No information concerning their identity or ethnicity was provided.

Apparently, Tkachev has an ally in the Interior Ministry. Deputy Minister Aleksandr Chekalin, who heads the Federal Migration Service, warned the State Duma of the need to oversee all foreigners in the Russian Federation. Approximately 600,000 persons received work permits this year and last, he claimed. Another 10,000-16,000 were apprehended with false or incorrectly completed work documents, he said, adding that a single registration system is needed to exercise effective control over all foreigners in the country. The ministry already has begun to compile a database of foreigners. (ITAR-TASS, 0835 GMT, 17 Sep 03; FBIS-SOV-2003-0917 via World News Connection)

**Russian Federation: Armed Forces**

By Lt. Col. Kris Beasly and Paul Lyons

**There's no place like home...**

Russia sees many security problems emanating from the south; thus, President Putin’s government is determined to create a better infrastructure to support major military and security forces in the southern positions of the country, especially between the Black and Caspian Seas. In fact, the President gathered a large number of military and political officials in the region earlier this month to discuss ways of strengthening Russia's positions on the Black Sea. In the wake of the meeting, on 22 September 03, Russian Defense Minister Sergei Ivanov
said, "[President Vladimir Putin] has signed a range of documents prepared by the Foreign Ministry, the FSB and the Defense Ministry aimed at creating a worthy military infrastructure in this important Russian region, which borders very explosive regions of the world." (KOMMERSANT, 22 Sep 03; What the Papers Say--Defense and Security via ISI Emerging Markets Database)

One key element of this campaign is a revitalized naval base on the Russian Black Sea coast to house the eastern section of the Russian Black Sea Fleet. When the USSR dissolved in 1991, Ukraine and Russia fought bitterly over the Black Sea Fleet. After much wrangling, they divided up the fleet and its personnel (Russia 82%, Ukraine 18%, Georgia 0%) and Ukraine signed an agreement to rent to Russia part of the naval base at Sevastopol for its portion of the divided fleet. The lease runs until 2017, and Russia plans on having it renewed, but it has begun also efforts to build a major new naval base at the port of Novorossiisk on the eastern littoral of the Black Sea (southwest of Krasnodar). On 4 October 2003, Black Sea Fleet Commander Vladimir Masorin announced, "Preliminary estimates indicate that the construction of the Black Sea Fleet naval base in Novorossiisk will be completed by 2010. Its cost will total approximately 2-3 billion rubles." (INTERFAX, 29 Sep 2003 via gazeta.ru) Masorin noted that the first phase would serve to enlarge and enhance the facilities for the forces already assigned there, namely a brigade securing the sea district and marine and fleet aviation units of the Black Sea Fleet. The plan then envisions expanding the two existing piers and enhancing port defenses. However, Russian Defense Minister Sergei Ivanov stated "This does not mean that we intend to leave our main naval base in Sevastopol and withdraw the Black Sea Fleet to Novorossiisk. The main base of the Black Sea Fleet will remain in Sevastopol." (KOMMERSANT, Ibid.) Ivanov noted that the new base will be used for mooring the warships withdrawn to the Krasnodar region since 1991 (i.e. the Eastern squadron of the fleet).
Masorin also stated that, "Further development of the Black Sea Fleet on the Russian coast has been planned. A state target program will be adopted. It will be linked to the overall development of the Russian Navy," he said. "The Black Sea Fleet commanders hope that it will be an excellent base not only for the forces currently stationed there but for additional forces as well," he said. (INTERFAX, 29 Sep 2003; gazeta.ru via Lexis-Nexis)

The bottom line: in addition to the modernized and expanded naval base, Russia intends to build a network of airbases, ports and military bases for the Armed Forces, to include the FSB’s newly reacquired Border Guard Service (THE HINDU, 29 Sep 03; The Financial Times via Lexis-Nexis).

Speaking of getting booted from the neighborhood…

Just as the breakup of the USSR created an (inequitable) division of the Black Sea Fleet and the need for new naval bases on the Black Sea, so too did it delete a key component of Russia's ballistic missile and space object tracking capability. General Anatoli Perminov, Commander of the Russian Space Troops, stated that the dismantling of the Skrunda radar in Latvia left a gap in the west and northwestern section of the electronic fence around Russia, facing the United Kingdom and the U.S. To fill that gap, the Russian Long-Range Radio Communication Research Institute, in one of their largest project of the last 10 years, developed the "Volga" radar to replace the older, less capable system.

On 2 October 03, Russian Space Troops began operational use of this new phased array radar, which was built near Baranovichi, Belarus (of note, the Space Troops attached great symbolic importance to achieving the first alert in time to celebrate the Russian "Day of the Space Troops," which is 2 October each year). Much like the "PAVED PAWS" system in the U.S., the primary mission of the new "Volga" radar is to detect and track incoming intercontinental ballistic missiles (ICBMs) and sea-launched ballistic missiles (SLBMs) and their warheads, in the event of an attack. Additionally, the radar helps track and
catalog space objects both for collision avoidance reasons and for general space situational awareness (i.e. tracking Russian and foreign satellites).

Although the system was first designed in the late 1980’s and construction begun more than a decade ago, lack of money forced the military to delay it. However, as economic conditions improved and more money was found for the defense budget, Russia was able to restart the project and insert updated technology. The finished system was first activated and placed in a test mode in December 02 and has now completed all appropriate testing according to the public information service of the Russian Space Troops (an separate military service charged with ground-based ICBM launch and defense and with space launch and military space operations). Compared to the older system, the new modular radar can detect ICBMs in flight at greater distances and with more precision and can detect, identify and track space objects up to "several thousand kilometers" above earth. Major General Anatoli Shishkin, deputy commander of the Space Troops, and officer in charge of space missile defense functions, noted that this modular design will allow for easier future expansion in other directions, if needed (CHANNEL ONE TV, Moscow, 0800 GMT, 2 Oct 03; BBC Monitoring International Reports via Lexis-Nexis).

As this system feeds the Russian missile detection and defense system, the data it provides may help reduce the possibilities of accidental nuclear war. As long as all major players with ICBMs/SLBMs have the ability to detect and verify launches with two independent means (called dual phenomenology in the U.S.), the odds of a software bug, mechanical problem or poor training triggering a false positive alert will diminish significantly. Like the U.S., Russia relies both on ground-radar and satellites. The Volga system will be able to cover almost 5,000-kilometers including most of Europe, the Mediterranean and deep into the Atlantic and Arctic oceans.
Russian space analysts may share space tracking data with Russian and NASA personnel that constantly track space debris to prevent collisions between debris and manned vehicles, such as the Soyuz capsule, the Space shuttle (whenever it flies again), and the International Space Station itself. (RIA-NOVOSTI; gazeta.ru, 3 Oct 03 via Lexis-Nexis)

He loves me; he loves me not
Russian President Vladimir Putin continues to disagree with the proposal that the U.S. has put forth regarding additional international help in Iraq. Twice in recent days, Mr. Putin, or senior members of his government, have compared Iraq with previous lingering conflicts in places like Vietnam (for the U.S,) and Afghanistan (for the U.S.S.R.). He demanded that a UN Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) should enhance the involvement of those who previously worked in the area (no doubt referring to both Russia and France), because "others" would lack the expertise and ability to work with the Iraqis. He even hinted at the quid pro quo he expects: Russia would accommodate the U.S., but Washington must ensure that Iraq honors its previous commercial contracts, both with Russia and others who opposed the war. Apparently, Presidents Putin and Bush were unable to come to terms at their recent Camp David summit. President Putin indicates Russia won't even entertain thoughts of sending Russian troops until a UNSCR is approved, but, judging by the Bosnian and Kosovo precedents, is it not precluded that Russian troops may participate eventually. (RTR and POLIT.RU, 3 Oct 03 via RFE/RL Newsline Part I, 6 Oct 03; RIA NOVOSTI (en.rian.ru), 6 Oct 03 The New York Times via russiajournal.com, 6 Oct 03)

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
WMD and non-proliferation — cooperation and joint efforts
While the War on Terrorism goes on, non-proliferation efforts continue to curb the spread of Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD). A myriad of diplomatic, military, and regulatory measures coalesced to create the security framework to protect the current inventories of WMD allowed for signatories to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), the Chemical Warfare Convention (CWC) and the Biological Weapons Convention (BWC). In contrast to the previous period and in response to the seemingly omnipresent threat of terrorism, this new "world order" has presented an image of increased cooperation and joint approaches to non-proliferation and collective defense.

Consequent to the cooperative biological security efforts with Russia, Georgia, Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan, the United States and Ukraine have negotiated a foundation from which to conduct joint research for protection from biological weapons. Nearing final agreement are implementation measures under the aegis of the Cooperative Threat Reduction Program (CTR). According to Brigadier General (Ret.) Thomas Kuenning, Director of the Cooperative Threat Reduction for the Defense Threat Reduction Agency (DTRA), the aim of the CTR Program is to install the measures necessary to "safeguard Ukrainian biological materials and facilities that pose a potential threat as weapons of mass destruction" (ITAR-TASS, 29 Sep 03; FBIS-SOV-2003-0929 via World News Connection).

In addition to U.S. initiatives with Russia and the CIS, Germany has invested both significant capital and technology in non-proliferation protocols with Russia. Recently, a delegation from the German Defense Ministry and other federal agencies visited the chemical weapons disposal plant in Gorny, in the Saratov region. The premise of this consortium of German and Russian agencies is "to study and monitor the implementation of the projects aimed at eliminating chemical weapons, storing and disposing of hazardous waste." (ITAR-TASS, 29 Sep 03; FBIS-SOV-0929 via World News Connection) The Gorny plant came on line in December 2002 and has been instrumental in diminishing chemical weapons stockpiles of yperite and lewisite. Further construction continues at
Gorny with a complex for burial of solid waste planned. All in all, Gorny is meant as a symbol of international cooperation in combating the transfer of inventory and the spread of chemical weapons. It's output will be vital in Russia's ability to "scrap 20 percent of its store of chemical weapons under a federal program and an international convention by 2007." (ITAR-TASS, 29 Sep 03; FBIS-SOV-0929 via World News Connection)

On the nuclear issue, U.S. and Russian scientists are attempting to initiate cooperative efforts aimed at stemming the tide of potential nuclear terrorism. According to Gennadi Mesyats, Vice President of the Russian Academy of Sciences, "joint projects are being implemented by the working group for countering radiological terrorism, which was created by the academies of sciences of the two countries...similar groups were created for countering computer terrorism and urban terrorism." (ITAR-TASS, 24 Sep 03: FBIS-SOV-0925 via World News Connection) At the 2nd International Conference on Nonproliferation, UN Under Secretary-General for Disarmament Affairs, Nobuyasu Abe proclaimed that "the U.S. and Russia as two powers, bear a special responsibility for strengthening the WMD nonproliferation regime....These two countries have made considerable progress, having signed the Moscow Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty. However, we would like to have more actions...(relating) to the implementation of the program on the reduction of a universal threat and global partnership against the proliferation of arms and mass destruction materials." (ITAR-TASS, 19 Sep 03; FBIS-SOV-0919 via World News Connection)

It is clear that the threat posed by weapons of mass destruction is more complex than just their intended use - their storage and that of their nuclear byproducts is of equal concern. A recent focus of admittedly contentious reporting is the possibility that Russian Navy personnel recently was exposed to potentially high doses of radiation at a base in the Northern Fleet.
The Bellona Foundation, a Norwegian environmentalist group, recently released a statement claiming that several seamen working on a nuclear reactor were exposed to high doses of radiation. According to Bellona, "ten enlisted men in the Northern Fleet, handling a nuclear reactor in early September, were exposed to intense hard radiation. This happened in Gremikha, the technical base of the Northern Federal Enterprise for Handling Radioactive Waste [a structure of the federal Nuclear Energy Ministry]" (NEZAVISIMAYA GAZETA, 25 Sep 03; via ISI Emerging Markets database) Gremikha Base Director Valeri Panteleev supports the Bellona Foundations claim. Panteleev claims that the Navy and the Nuclear Energy Ministry lacked specific knowledge of where on the base radioactive waste was located. From all accounts, it appears that "in mid-July this year, while digging, some personnel at the base struck a waste burial site and were exposed to hard radiation. The doses they received amounted to the average annual dose." (NEZAVISIMAYA GAZETA, 25 Sep 03; via ISI Emerging Markets database).

In a rather scathing analysis, Nezavisimaya Gazeta (25 Sep 03; via ISI Emerging Markets database), complains that "all through the 1990s, senior officers of the 12th Main Directorate of the Defense Ministry [security of nuclear weapons and all sorts of nuclear components] repeated over and over that all radioactive substances and elements were monitored and under control, that the sites were absolutely secure. We see now that radioactive substances were simply dumped and forgotten."

That remains to be seen. To this end, really genuine international collaboration and cooperation on all aspects of nuclear, chemical and biological weapons security would be prudent and potentially valuable instruments in preventing the proliferation of weapons of mass-destruction.

Newly Independent States: Western Region
By Elena Selyuk

UKRAINE

Much ado about nothing

On September 19, 2003, at the CIS summit in Yalta, the Presidents of Ukraine, Belarus, Russia and Kazakhstan signed an agreement on the formation of a Single Economic Space (SES). The agreement envisages "unification of the customs territories of the states, in which the same economic mechanisms will function to ensure free movement of goods, services, assets and labor. The member states will pursue the same foreign trade, taxation and monetary, crediting and foreign exchange policy." (ITAR-TASS, 22 Sep 03 via Lexis-Nexis)

The President of Belarus, Aleksandr Lukashenko, stated that the agreement would solve 90%-95% of Belarussian economic problems. (WWW.BELARUSTODAY.INFO, 20 Sep 03) He also expressed his hopes that the economic union would bring Belarus and Ukraine in to closer cooperation.

Compared to Belarus', Ukraine's chances of benefiting from this treaty are significantly smaller. Even the act of signing the agreement has generated controversy in Ukraine. Yuliya Tymoshenko, the leader of the Fatherland Party, appealed to the international community not to recognize the signature of Leonid Kuchma on any international documents. The party started a new stage in its campaign to impeach the president. (BBC MONITORING, 23 Sep 03 via Lexis-Nexis) Victor Yushchenko, the leader of Our Ukraine alliance party blok also threatened Kuchma with impeachment, claiming that the president had sold out Ukraine's sovereignty. Even Kuchma's own ministers (of foreign affairs, economics, and justice) opposed the agreement, saying that it harmed the economic and political interests of the country.
The reaction of the Ukrainian opposition and of some current government members to signing the accord is well justified. Of all four members, Ukraine has the most to lose.

Firstly, the Yalta accord requires all members to synchronize the WTO negotiations and join on the same terms, which disadvantages Ukraine immensely. Experts agree that of these four countries, Ukraine has progressed the farthest in WTO negotiations, with Russia lagging far behind and Belarus not even close to membership. Thus, actual accession is very likely to be delayed. In addition, a clause in the treaty stipulates that should one SES member decide to break away from the agreement and join the WTO separately, it would not be able to set conditions for other members. On this issue too, Ukraine will lose. Thus, there is a clear interest on the part of Ukraine to join before Russia in order to extract import trade concessions from Moscow — for example in sugar production.

Secondly, by entering into an economic agreement with Russia, Ukraine also jeopardizes its relations with Europe and North America. The U.S. ambassador to Ukraine alluded to potential criticism of the treaty: "I think the consequences of such steps need to be looked at carefully, in order to see if they accord with Ukraine's aspiration to integrate with the Euro-Atlantic Community." Naturally, Kiev's rekindling of ties with authoritarian Russia does not please many Western commentators. Questions also arise regarding Ukraine's closer integration with East or West. The German ambassador to Ukraine, Dietmar Stuedemann, called on Ukraine to be more consistent in relations with EU. "We have no clear-cut idea of Ukraine's purposes concerning the EU," he said. (UKRAINIAN NEWS AGENCY, 23 Sep 03 via ISI Emerging Markets Database) Thus, an already remote possibility of Ukraine's accession to the European Union might be put off even longer. Should the customs union with Russia enter into force, free trade with the EU will become impossible, as it is not feasible for Ukraine to harmonize
its tariff policy with the EU and Russia at the same time. (WWW.TOL.CZ, 26 Sep 03)

Thirdly, cheap Russian energy sources, which Ukraine strives to obtain by signing the accord, might turn out to be a mixed blessing. The SES agreement speaks of "ensuring non-discriminatory access and an equal level of tariffs for several natural monopolies." Yuliya Tymoshenko, nonetheless, noted that tariffs and prices were different concepts. Tariffs are set by the state, while prices are determined by the market. "There are no monopolies in Russia today on oil and gas extraction, and so prices will be set by owners, not the state," she claimed. (ZERKALO NEDELI, 20 Sep 03; BBC Monitoring via Lexis-Nexis 23 Sep 2003)

Even if cheap energy were to become accessible, it is not necessarily desirable. Cheap energy sources will increase Ukraine's dependency on Russia and will not provide incentives for Ukraine to move away from its energy-intensive economy, thus stifling the potential competitiveness of its products by stifling new technological development.

Finally, the accord contains a provision that introduces a supranational body — the SES commission — with the power to influence Ukraine's internal affairs. This directly contradicts the Ukrainian constitution, which prohibits surrendering Ukraine's sovereignty to any supranational body. Furthermore, decisions within the commission will be taken by a majority vote, based on economic potential. Clearly, the Ukrainian economy does not compare to the Russian economy in size, resulting in a potential vote distribution of 9.9% for Ukraine versus 83% for Russia. (UNIAN News Agency 22 Sep 03; BBC Monitoring via Lexis-Nexis)

On the other hand, SES is far from being the first endeavor of the CIS members to create some sort of economic or political union. Most of these attempts ended with words on paper rather than actions. The Eurasian Economic Community (EuAsEC), for example, was formed less than three years before the current treaty, in October of 2000 by five countries — Russia, Belarus, Kazakhstan,
Tajikistan, and Kyrgyzstan, with Moldova, Ukraine, and Armenia having observer status. Defining a common stance at negotiations on entry to the WTO, establishing a free-trade zone, creating a common customs, transport and energy space were some of the goals of this accord - goals, very much like those of the SES. Creation of an almost identical organization (SES) would have been redundant, had the EuAsEC been successful in implementing its aims.

The Russian-Belorussian union likewise is struggling to get off the ground. The introduction of the non-cash Russian ruble, initially planned for October 1, 2003, was recently postponed in Belarus. The CIS itself has become a largely bureaucratic body, that implements only a fraction of all signed documents.

Another likely drag on the efficacy of the accord is an "out" clause, which gives any member state the option of not participating at any stage of the treaty. It is already becoming clear that Kiev might be interested only in the free-trade zone and not the customs union. President Kuchma himself has voiced doubt that the national parliament would ratify the SES accord. (ITAR-TASS 30 Sep 03 via Lexis-Nexis)

The question arises — why sign an agreement, which is already harming Ukraine politically and could potentially harm it economically? The answer might be that Kuchma is desperately seeking the Kremlin's political support before the upcoming presidential elections. In fact, President Putin himself hinted at a recent press conference that "Kuchma's bitter rivals" are queuing up for Russian approval. (WWW.TOL.CZ, 26 Sep 03) And who could doubt the choice Kuchma would make between the well being of the country and his own political security?

Newly Independent States: Caucasus

By Ariela Shapiro
GEORGIA

In the past month, energy security has dictated much of U.S. and Russian foreign policies toward the South Caucasus, and in particular toward Azerbaijan and Georgia. In Georgia, on 27 September, the Assistant Coordinator of the U.S. Department of State announced that future U.S. aid to Georgia is to be reduced by a quarter, from about $110m to about $77m. (SARKE DAILY, 27 Sep 03 via ISI Emerging Databases) These funds would have aided both the Ministries of Finance and of Fuel & Energy. The catalyst for the U.S. declaration became clear on 30 September, when Georgian President Shevardnadze announced that his government had signed a 25-year contract with Russia's Gazeksport, a subsidiary of Gazprom, to begin delivery of gas to Georgia on 15 October (SARKE DAILY, 2 Oct 03 via ISI Emerging Databases). At present, Georgia's three gas suppliers are Azerbaijan, via the soon-to-be-functional Baku-Tbilisi-Erzurum pipeline (KAVKASIA-PRESS, Oct 1 03; FBIS-SOV-2003-1001 via World News Connection), and the Russian energy companies: Itera and Gazprom. This new venture will allow the Russian government, which owns the controlling stock of Gazprom (KAVKASIA-PRESS, 27 Sep 03; FBIS-SOV-2003-0927 via World News Connection), the ability to transport Iranian gas to Europe and Russia via the South Caucasian transit route, mainly through Georgia and Armenia. In exchange for giving Russia control of Georgia's energy markets, the United States has staked its claim in the Azerbaijan oil sectors (addressed in detail later in the report).

By ceding control over Georgia’s energy sector, the United States may have hastened the end of GUUAM, the cooperative alliance of Georgia, Ukraine, Uzbekistan, Azerbaijan, and Moldova, while indirectly promoting a Russian dominated CIS communal economic zone. Not coincidentally, at the recent CIS summit in Yalta, the presidents of Belarus, Russia, Ukraine, and Kazakhstan signed an agreement for the creation of a "CIS Free Economic Zone." (GEORGIAN RADIO, 22 Sep 03; FBIS-SOV-2003-0922 via World News Connection). Although Georgia was not a signatory, it is considering bilateral
cooperation with the free trade zone. (BBC Monitoring, 22 Sep 03; via Lexis-Nexis)

Georgia's future economic integration, along with the Abkhazian issue, are sure to be the most debated issues in the upcoming 2 November parliamentary elections, in which nine political blocs are registered to participate.

AZERBAIJAN

On 2 October, the withdrawal of Heidar Aliev from the October 15 presidential elections was announced, and his son Ilham Aliev was named as the sole candidate of the regime's Yeni Azerbaijan Party. (Associated Press, 2 Oct 03 via Lexis-Nexis) This move proved helpful to obtaining American support and continuing economic involvement in Azerbaijan, while also signifying a potential for more political openness in what had been viewed widely as the corrupt and autocratic Aliev regime.

The U.S. interest in keeping either Heidar or Ilham Aliev in Baku was stated even before Heidar Aliev stepped down, as indicated by President Bush's letter of congratulations to Ilham Aliev on his appointment as prime minister (Associated Press, 2 Oct, 03 via Lexis-Nexis), and also in meeting Aliev at a party arranged for the 58th UN Summit Conference. (Financial Times Information, 24 Sep, 03 via Lexis-Nexis) The United States is concerned with the continuity of power in Azerbaijan, prevention of Russian and Iranian meddling, construction of the Baku-Ceyhan pipeline, and stability for American and international energy investors. These short-term goals outweigh the constant barrage of media reports emanating from Azerbaijani and international media sources regarding the tough methods used by the current Aliev government against opposition candidates. (Baku Tehran, 22 Sep 03; FBIS-SOV-2003-0922 via World News Connection; Baku Tehran, 23 Sep 03; FBIS-SOV-2003-0923 via Lexis-Nexis; BBC Monitoring, 2 Oct 03 via Lexis-Nexis) These interests also eclipse the recent bribery allegations surrounding attempts to privatize the Azeri oil company
Socar, in which both Heidar Aliev and Ilham Aliev are implicated. (Energy Intelligence Group, Inc, 16 Sep 03 via Lexis-Nexis) In one incident to date, Washington succumbed to pressure from the Helsinki Citizens’ Assembly sufficiently to indicate at least a desire to see "free and open elections" in Azerbaijan. (Baku Tehran, 23 Sep 03; FBIS-SOV-2003-0923; via World News Connection)

Ilham Aliev appears more concerned with maintaining solid economic relations with the West than sustaining the autocratic system his father created, perhaps because of his background as a senior executive of Socar (Energy Intelligence Group, 2 Oct 03 via Lexis-Nexis), his current connections with American and European companies, such as Omega Advisors and Oily Rock (United Press International, 24 Sep 03 via Lexis-Nexis) and statements by former business associates in Socar. (Energy Intelligence Group, 2 Oct 03 via Lexis-Nexis)

Granted, the elections will not be completely open or free, but the current environment does indicate signs of greater political openness in the areas of media and political competition.

In addition to American support, Ilham Aliev recently met with Russian President Vladmir Putin at the Yalta CIS Summit, at which time Putin indicated support of Ilham Aliev as a successor to Heidar Aliev. (Associated Press, 18 Sep 03 via Lexis-Nexis) Russian and Azerbaijani bilateral trade has increased precipitously in the past few years, 70% in 2002 and 20% in the first five months of 2003 (Interfax, 18 Sep 03; Associated Press via Lexis-Nexis), indicating a deepening of relations between the two countries. This extension of ties validates the notion that GUUAM has ceased to be a working mechanism while indicating also that the existing rivalry over South Caucasian energy sources between the United States and Russia may soon center on Azerbaijan.

**CHECHNYA**
The 6 October 2003 Chechen elections represent Moscow’s desire to appear as separating itself politically from the Chechen quagmire. In Moscow’s desperate effort to portray the Chechen situation as stable and fully capable of building a working democratic apparatus and policy making structure, every endeavor was made to provide the 6 October elections with all the "proper" democratic trappings. These included the distribution, to over 600,000 Chechens, of proper forms of identification (in the form of Russian passports) to enable them to vote (Financial Times, 27 Sep 03; BBC Monitoring via Lexis-Nexis) as well as the closure of Ingushetian refugee camps (which held an estimated 10,000 refugees) by the Interior Ministry (Agence France Presse, 1 Oct 03 via Lexis-Nexis) to give the refugees greater access to the polls and to preempt international critique for preventing proper electoral representation for the Chechen refugee population.

However, the measures are more clearly indicative of a larger Russian objective, to cloak the republic in a security blanket, and thus ensure the absence of foreign observers and prevent escape for Chechen citizens living in the republic. The military forces, which consist of the FSB, the Defense Ministry (via GRU units), the Interior Ministry and the Chechen Internal Police force, sprang into action in the week before the election in a series of movements which included the FSB strengthening the border between Georgia and Chechnya (ITAR-TASS, 30 SEP, 03; FBIS-SOV-2003-0930 via World News Connection); and an increased presence of both the Interior Ministry and the Internal Chechen Police to "guard the polling stations" and "monitor the traffic" around Grozny. (ITAR-TASS, 2 Oct 03 via Lexis-Nexis) Indeed, there was an armed security guard for every ten people eligible to vote on election morning, while estimates place the number of Interior Ministry personnel at 5,000 and Chechen Internal Police at 13,500. (WHAT THE PAPERS SAY - Russian Political Monitor, 6 Oct 03 via ISI Emerging Databases; ROSSIYSKAYA GAZETA, 26 Sep 03 FBIS-SOV-2003-0926 via World News Connection)
All 30,000 Russian federal forces were allowed to cast their vote while the estimated 50,000 Chechen citizens living abroad in Georgia, Russia or elsewhere were not provided transportation or access papers to participate in the election. (Associated Press, 3 Oct 03 via Lexis-Nexis)

Additionally, Kadyrov's victory in the election was guaranteed before a vote was cast by the absence of other viable candidates, such as Malik Saidullayev, Aslambek Aslakhanov, and Husein Dzhabrailov, all of whom had been either pressured or prevented from participating in the elections by the Moscow or Chechen authorities. Thus, the election failed to provide either pluralist competition or proper representation of the Chechen political will by "electing" Akhmad Kadyrov in an unprecedented 81.1% majority. (New York Times, 6 Oct 03; What the Papers Say, 6 Oct 03 via ISI Emerging Databases)

International criticism of the election has been pointed, but has avoided the denunciation of Kadyrov as the legitimate leader of the Chechen government. Among the critics are the U.S. State Department spokesman Richard Boucher and NATO's secretary-general designate Jaap de Hoop Scheffer, both of whom asserted that the election did not meet international standards. (AGENCE FRANCE PRESSE, 6 Oct 03 via ISI Emerging Markets; FINANCIAL TIMES, 7 Oct 03 via Lexis-Nexis) The Bush-Putin Camp David Summit of 26-27 September and the U.S. desire for a U.N. mandated military presence in Iraq, may explain the relatively subdued U.S. criticism of the Chechen elections.

No observers were sent by any of the major NGO's, including the U.N., PACE (Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe), or the OSCE because of wide skepticism regarding these "elections." However, the Organization of Islamic Conference, to which Russia has recently applied to be an observer state, the Arab League and CIS countries did send observers. (FINANCIAL TIMES, 5 Oct, 03; BBC Monitoring via Lexis-Nexis)
Thus, in a mockery of the democratic process, which is sure to embitter war-battered Chechens, Kadyrov has been handed a republic rife with internal divisions, powerful interest groups, and a radicalized young Chechen population. With few institutional precedents or structures to guide him in ruling the Chechen people, he will continue his policy of enforcing the "rule of law" via the machine gun and bayonet. Thus, the elections have served to harm the one societal element it was supposedly aimed to help — the Chechen populace. Indeed, the increased activities of the militants, Kadyrov's low popularity in the republic, and massive human rights violations perpetrated by the federal forces and Internal Chechen Police will further radicalize Chechens in the republic and beyond, inuring them to violence and embittering them with regard to "solutions" forged through the so-called democratic process.

Newly Independent States: Central Asia
By David Montgomery

Political parties, international relations, and defense
Though some anti-regime activity is brewing, opposition parties in Turkmenistan and Kyrgyzstan remain relatively weak. Some groups try to unite to challenge the status quo; the U.S. and Russia vie for influence in Central Asia; Kazakhstan pushes a multi-vector foreign policy; and Tajikistan reaches out to everyone. One factor common to the entire region is military cooperation in preparation for "anti-terrorism" action.

Surviving a 2002 assassination attempt, Turkmen President Saparmurat Niyazov came down heavily on political opposition groups. On 29 September, the leaders of the four most viable opposition entities announced a willingness to join forces within the newly-created structure of the Union of Democratic Forces of Turkmenistan (UDFT). The ability of the four groups to function as a unified force is somewhat questionable and, given that most members of the group remain in
exile, the effectiveness of their proposed "democratic" platform is uncertain. Akmukhammet Velsapar, a dissident émigré writer, referred to the UDFT as "the beginning of the end of the Niyazov regime," whereas poet in exile Shirali Nurmukhammet described the UDFT as a "fictitious marriage... [that] won't last long." (EURASIANET, 30 Sep 03 via www.eurasianet.org) Despite the uncertain future of UDFT, it does represent the most significant challenge to Niyazov's hegemony in recent years.

While there may be discontent with the Niyazov government, the media in Turkmenistan remain rigidly controlled by the state and informing the population about UDFT may prove difficult. A recent poll in Kyrgyzstan, for example, suggests caution about the ability of opposition parties to get out their message: of 900 surveyed, over 40 percent were unable to name any of the opposition parties, while over 65 percent were unable to name a party they trusted. The three most popular parties were: Ar-Namys (Honor) — the party of Felix Kulov, the imprisoned former Vice President and Mayor of Bishkek — at 35 percent awareness and 17 percent trust; the Communist parties at 25.2 percent awareness and 14 percent trust; and the Ata-Meken (Fatherland) party at 24.8 percent awareness and 14 percent trust (KABAR, 1035 GMT, 3 Oct 03; FBIS-SOV-2003-1003 via World News Connection; RFE/RL, 6 Oct 03 via www.rferl.org). Yet, compared with Turkmenistan, Kyrgyzstan has a relatively high degree of freedom of the press, suggesting the difficulty opposition groups face in trying to initiate social change and assert political control.

While groups such as UDFT, Ar-Namys, and Ata-Meken, among others, seek leadership roles within the decision-making structure of the state, external forces also vie for influence. The jockeying for position of the U.S. and Russia is the best contemporary example of Central Asia playing home to "Great Game" rivalries. By the end of the month, both countries will have military bases operating in Kyrgyzstan and though the presence of U.S. troops is described as temporary, until the end of the campaign in Afghanistan, the U.S.
undoubtedly will want to continue to assert a role in the region. The Russian military will remain in Kyrgyzstan for an indefinite period and is settling in to re-establish its hegemonic influence over Central Asia.

Central Asian leaders astutely use the interests of other governments to their own advantage. Looking to expand markets for its energy resources and gain admittance next year to the World Trade Organization, Kazakhstan has a multi-vector policy of simultaneously engaging China, Russia, and the U.S. (EURASIANET, 03 Oct 03, via www.eurasianet.org) Kazakhstan was one of the driving forces behind the Almaty-Bishkek-Kashgar-Islamabad-Karachi trade route opened 7 October 2003. This will facilitate the transit of automobile shipments by issuing a limited number of licenses with unrestricted movement throughout Kazakhstan-Kyrgyzstan-China-Pakistan. (ITAR-TASS, 1607 GMT, 01 Oct 03; FBIS-SOV-2003-1001 via World News Connection)

Tajikistan on the other hand, with its weaker economic base, has been reaching out to everyone with a slew of proposals hoping someone will take interest: from designating Central Asia a "nuclear free zone" and declaring 2005-2015 the "International Fresh Water Decade," to increasing regional railway effectiveness and lobbying for a global partnership to combat the drug trade. (ITAR-TASS, 0918 GMT, 03 Oct 03; FBIS-SOV-2003-1003; 1752 GMT, 1329 GMT, 1802 GMT, 30 Sep 03; FBIS-SOV-2003-0930 via World News Connection)

While the various countries of Central Asia confront internal opposition and court lucrative trans-national trade relations, one issue upon which they seem able to agree and work together is the defense front. For the most part, the various administrations have cooperated in their anti-terrorism efforts, even when some aspects of this approach clearly have been politically motivated, e.g. the proposed shift of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) Regional Anti-terrorism Center from Bishkek to Tashkent. (see NIS Observed, 10 Sep 03) Kyrgyzstan recently held exercises of the Collective Rapid Deployment Force,
which may double its number of troops over the next few months. (ITAR-TASS, 1118 GMT, 26 Sep 03; 1255 GMT, 25 Sep 03; FBIS-SOV-2003-0926 via World News Connection) Kazakhstan has called for the creation of a center to foster preventive diplomacy and to counteract conflict in Central Asia. The center, which would be based in Almaty, in essence would serve as a conduit for UN peace and security initiatives in the region. (ITAR-TASS, 0618 GMT, 26 Sep 03; FBIS-SOV-2003-0926 via World News Connection) And NATO, wanting to continue working with Uzbekistan on defense reforms, also has expressed readiness to begin working with Turkmenistan on the Partnership for Peace program. (ITAR-TASS, 0458 GMT, 26 Sep 03; FBIS-SOV-2003-0926; 1319 GMT, 29 Sep 03; FBIS-SOV-2003-0929, via World News Connection)