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## Russian Federation: Executive Branch

By Susan Cavan

### **PRESIDENCY**

#### **Longtime presidential aide abruptly fired**

President Yel'tsin dismissed his foreign policy adviser, Dmitri Ryurikov, on 4 April, over the handling of the Union Treaty signed with Belarus. According to Ekho Moskvu, Ryurikov's advocacy for a quick treaty with Belarus as well as his premature statements prior to the signing of the treaty that the president had approved it, when in fact Yel'tsin had not yet decided to sign, were behind the dismissal. In the approximately six years that Ryurikov has served as Presidential adviser, he has been involved in negotiations over NATO expansion, CIS relations, arms control and many other critical foreign affairs. Yel'tsin is expected to appoint Ryurikov to a new position soon. Presidential spokesman Sergei Yastrzhembsky will coordinate the administration's foreign policy issues until a replacement for Ryurikov is appointed.

Another presidential adviser is leaving the Kremlin to take up a government position. Sergei Ignatyev, Yel'tsin's economic adviser, has been appointed First Deputy Finance Minister. It is rumored that Alexandr Livshits, who was the presidential economic adviser before Ignatyev, will return to this post.

### **RF GOVERNMENT**

#### **More bad news for Chernomyrdin**

Two key government members, allies of Prime Minister Viktor Chernomyrdin, have tendered their resignations. Labor Minister Gennadi Melikyan resigned on 3 April and is said to be preparing to run for State Duma in a by-election in the Rostov region. Melikyan was appointed to the Government in June 1992 and is a

leading member of Chernomyrdin's NDR party. His duties have been assumed by recently-appointed Vice Premier Oleg Syusyev. Fuel and Energy Minister Petr Rodionov on 4 April also tendered his resignation and will return to the private sector. Prior to being appointed Minister in August 1996, Rodionov was Director of Lentransgaz, a regional transport unit for Gazprom. (Reuters, 4 Apr 97)

In addition to losing two potential supporters against the Chubais team, which is rapidly filling the ranks of the government, Chernomyrdin will also have a Chubais ally as deputy to his most trusted assistant. Sergei Vasiliev, formerly Deputy Minister of Economy, has been named as First Deputy Chief of the Government Staff. The current head of the Government Staff, Vladimir Babichev, was downgraded from Deputy Premier to Minister in the recent reshuffle.

There may be further resignations of Chernomyrdin allies as the Finance Ministry becomes the focus of the reshuffle. With Sergei Ignatyev joining Alexei Kudrin as First Deputy Finance Minister, the prospects for Andrei Vavilov, who is also a First Deputy Finance Minister and Andrei Petrov, a deputy Finance Minister, appear decidedly glum.

Chernomyrdin has also again been the recipient of a presidential dressing down. President Yel'tsin, during a televised segment of his meeting with Chernomyrdin, once again laid the blame for the wage arrears and tax collection problems on the government. Chernomyrdin responded later by asserting that the government was making progress on the wage arrears and promising pensioners payments by July. (RFE/RL Newline, 9 Apr 97)

Despite presidential efforts to blame Chernomyrdin for budget problems and pin hopes on the finance reforms of Chubais, the Duma appears to be taking the opposite tack. Refusing to place a report by Anatoli Chubais on their agenda, the State Duma Council has requested that Chernomyrdin give the budget report.

The government's spokesman, Shabdurasulov, claims that Chubais will give the report however. (RFE/RL Newsline, 9 Apr 97)

## Russian Federation: Foreign Relations

By Chandler Rosenberger

### **Questionable dealings with Armenia; sops for Azerbaijan**

Scandal surrounding a controversial sale of military hardware to Armenia is forcing Russia into a complicated diplomatic dance.

Russian Defense Ministry officials denied the government had sought to disrupt the Caucasus and blamed the unauthorized delivery of Russian tanks, combat armored vehicles, and other weapons on rogue members with ties to former minister Pavel Grachev. Moscow newspapers, however, noted that the sales came just as Azerbaijan and Georgia were to open a new delivery route for Caspian Sea oil that will run from Baku to Supsa. If opened, the new route will compete with a rail delivery system to the Russian port of Novorossiysk. (Novaya Gazeta, 24-30 Mar 97)

The arms deal comes just as the Armenian parliament appointed Robert Kocharian, a notorious hard-liner, to be premier. Kocharian is a former president of the self-proclaimed Nagorno-Karabakh republic in the ethnically Armenian enclave within Azerbaijan. (ITAR-TASS, 24 Mar 97)

In an apparent move to appease the Azeri government, Russia extradited former Azeri prime minister Suret Guseynov to Baku on March 27. Guseynov was once a national hero but was implicated in an attempted coup launched in October 1994. The Russian Foreign Ministry denied the move was a diplomatic gesture tied to the Armenian arms deal. (ITAR-TASS, 27 Mar 97)

### **Ministry to send aid to Iran; expert comments on arms sales to Iran**

Rosvooruzheniye, Russia's state-run arms exporter, paid for an Ilyushin Il-76TD transport plane to fly humanitarian aid to Iran, whose northeastern region had been hit by an earthquake.

The unusual gesture appeared to be an attempt to curry favor with the regime in Tehran. According to Rosvooruzheniye, current Russian-Iranian military contracts amount to about \$1 billion.

At least one Russian expert on arms sales to the Middle East said Russia was unlikely to honor an agreement with the U.S. not to sign any new weapons deals after 1999. "It is quite possible that after 1999 Moscow will not renounce arms exports to Tehran especially given that Iran's neighbors, in particular in the Persian Gulf, carry on with massive arms purchases," independent Russian expert Ruslan Pukhov told Interfax. (Interfax, 28 Mar 97)

### **Russians approach Germans on problems with NATO expansion...**

In meetings in Bonn with his German counterpart, Russian Foreign Minister Yevgeniy Primakov stressed that Russia expects NATO to define its relationship to Russia in a treaty that would be legally binding.

Russia would prefer that "the document enshrine NATO's renunciation of the deployment of nuclear weapons in Eastern Europe," Primakov said. "We are now holding talks about putting this provision on record and accompanying it with a certain explanation on the corresponding military infrastructures not being created."

Primakov met German Foreign Minister Klaus Kinkel on 29-30 March to prepare a mid-April trip by Boris Yel'tsin. (ITAR-TASS World Service, 29 Mar 97)

### **...and lay down a marker on membership for Baltics**

A Voice of Russia editorial reminded listeners of Primakov's strong opposition to the expansion of NATO to the Baltic states. "After the Helsinki summit," the editorial recounted, "US Secretary of State Madeleine Albright said that NATO was open for all market democracies and the first group of new members would not be the last. This causes a negative reaction in Moscow, especially as the talk concerns the Baltic countries. Russian Foreign Minister Yevgeniy Primakov has said that if these countries are admitted to NATO the whole structure of relations between Russia and the alliance will be undermined. Russia is concerned mainly about the isolation and admission of new members who pose a threat to Russia." (Voice of Russia World Service, 26 Mar 97)

### **CIS integration questioned**

The Russian Foreign Ministry condemned a report published in Moscow newspapers that questioned the government's motives in pushing integration of the Commonwealth of Independent States.

The anonymous report, entitled "The CIS: Beginning or End of History?," was published on the eve of the CIS summit. Gennadi Tarasov, director of the Information and Press Department of the Russian Foreign Ministry, told ITAR-TASS that "judging by the tone and slant of this report, its anonymous authors clearly wanted not just to discredit Russia's principled line and pragmatic policy toward the CIS member states, but to attempt to drive a wedge between them, to check the gathering momentum of integration within the commonwealth which, as the Russian leadership repeatedly stressed, is a very important area of our foreign policy." (ITAR-TASS World Service, 28 Mar 97)

### **Relations with China warm as 'multipolarity' becomes Russian mantra**

Chinese Vice Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Qian Qichen wound up a visit to Moscow at the end of March with a military agreement covering troops on the Chinese-Russian border. The agreement is part of a larger deal on military cooperation that also includes Kazakstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Tajikistan.

The Russian Foreign Ministry heralded the talks as a success story of their attempts to promote a post-Cold War 'multipolar' era. Qichen's visit also prepared a summit scheduled for the end of April between PRC Chairman Jiang Zemin and Boris Yeltsin. (Interfax, 27 Mar 97)

## **Comment**

### **Aggressive Moves in the 'Great Game'**

If the search for access to Caspian Sea oil is this century's version of the 'Great Game,' then Russian Foreign Minister Yevgeniy Primakov is happy to play. This former director of Moscow's Institute for Oriental Studies knows the region and knows which ethnic minorities his nation's secret service can detonate like a buried mine.

It seems that Russia has decided it is time to blow a hole in plans to run Caspian oil across Azerbaijan to the Georgian port of Supsa. Russia would much prefer that oil come out across its foot in the Caucasus to their port in Novorossiysk but this plan has been delayed by the chaos in Chechnya. Russia seems to have decided not to be the only nation whose oil exports are hampered by an ethnic clash. It is time, it seems, to detonate the Armenian enclave in Azerbaijan called Nagorno-Karabakh.

Within weeks of the first tentative shipments of oil across the Azeri-Georgian route, Armenia has received Russian tanks, combat armored vehicles, and other weapons. Armenia's new premier, a hard-liner from Nagorno-Karabakh, can be expected to put his new tools to good use. One can expect terrorist activity against the pipeline in the name of 'Greater Armenia;' one might even fear the complete collapse of the 1993 Azeri-Armenian cease-fire.

Some in Moscow seem reluctant to allow proxy wars to be Russia's way of pursuing politics by other means. Defense Minister Igor Rodionov probably

confirmed reports of the arms transfer to Armenia in the hope of subverting it, since the deal required cooperation with Iran, a nation Rodionov identified in December as one of Russia's potential enemies. The arms-to-Armenia scandal is therefore a facet of two games -- one among nations for influence in Central Asia, and one among ministers for influence over Russian forces abroad. We may therefore soon see Rodionov's star fade along with the prospects for peace in the Caucasus. Primakov's skills in foreign policy may be merely above-average, but in wily bureaucratic battles he has no peer.

## Russian Federation: Political Parties and Legislative Branch

By Michael Thurman

### **CONSTITUTIONAL COURT, FEDERAL ASSEMBLY, POLITICAL PARTIES CONSTITUTIONAL COURT**

#### **Yeltsin said he will recommend Fedotov to the Constitutional Court**

Mikhail Fedotov, 47, is currently the Russian delegate to UNESCO. The Russian Constitutional Court consists of 19 judges, who, in accordance with the Constitution, are appointed by the Upper House of the Russian Parliament on the president's recommendation. There is now a vacancy due to the retirement of Chairman of the Constitutional Court Vladimir Tumanov. The efficacy of the Constitutional Court in defending the rule of law is hampered both by the vagaries of the Constitution, as well as by the often capricious and personalized nature of the Yeltsin Administration. The effect that one man can have on the system is probably minute. (ITAR-TASS, 13 Feb 97)

### **FEDERAL ASSEMBLY**

State Duma Committee on Industry, Transport and Energy advises widening the arms trade

It was agreed that a draft law on Russia's military-technical cooperation with other states, now in preparation for the second reading, should have a flexible mechanism for licensing arms producers for exports. Deputy Defense Industry Minister Vladimir Pakhomov said defense factories that had been through state attestation could be authorized for trading in arms, with tight controls by the state. This "could link interests of the state and of producers of military export products", Pakhomov said. At present, nine companies, including state-owned Rosvooruzheniye, are licensed for arms exports. Fifteen more have applied for the license. Linking the interests of the Russian state with arms producers cannot be welcome for the United States or Russia's neighbors. (ITAR-TASS, 13 Feb 97)

### **State Duma opposes power cuts to military units**

The Russian State Duma has passed in the first reading a draft law on criminal responsibility of officials guilty of deliberate electricity switch-offs in military units. The bill says such measures, taken to make military units pay their electricity debts, pose a threat to Russian national security. The bill was supported by 253 deputies. The bill does not, however, provide the necessary funds nor does it further explain how the electricity bills are to be paid. (ITAR-TASS, 21 Feb 97)

## **POLITICAL PARTIES**

### **Aleksandr Lebed plans new political union or party**

It will be announced at the first congress of the Russian People's Republican Party (RNRP) that a union will be set up which will include 47 Russian parties and public organizations. "We are ready to take power without silly actions, putsches, or coups, and we will manage to hold on to this power," Lebed said. The new union will also concentrate on strengthening the country. According to Lebed, "There must be dictatorship among authorities so that there will be democracy in the country." Lebed's formation of a new political party is in keeping with the personalized nature of contemporary Russian politics. (Interfax, 1 Mar 97)

# Newly Independent States: CIS

By Mark W. Jones

## **CIS summit held in Moscow**

Leaders of all Commonwealth republics met in Moscow on 28 March for the CIS summit. Originally, the leaders were to discuss economic integration, peacekeeping, and the election of certain administrators and officials. By the end of the summit, the heads of state did in fact produce a long-term economic integration concept which addressed, among other things, the formation of financial industrial groups and a plan to use existing transport routes and corridors more effectively while at the same time planning to build new routes. According to reports on the Mayak Radio Network (28 Mar 97), the leaders also stressed that there cannot be a Commonwealth if conflicts exist within it. They called for all conflicts to be eradicated as quickly as possible and proposed the formation of a committee to address such issues. Also at the summit, Russian president Boris Yel'tsin was reelected chairman of the Committee of Heads of State.

The Georgian and Ukrainian presidents walked away from the meetings upbeat, calling the event a success. Other leaders, however, remained cautious about the pace of integration. According to a report in Interfax (28 Mar 97) Kazak President Nursultan Nazarbayev noted that any forced integration will lead to the ruin of the CIS. Leaders of other Central Asian republics echoed this sentiment.

## **A view from the Big Four integration committee**

Nigmatzhan Isingar, chairman of the Integration Committee of the Agreement of the Four (Russia, Kazakhstan, Belarus, and Kyrgyzstan) was quoted in Panorama (Almaty, 14 Mar 97) as saying Russia's policy toward the former Soviet Republics is still mainly defined by forces which hinder the new states'

progress and which make them fully dependent on Moscow. In his opinion, such policies are the main obstacle to CIS integration.

### **CIS defense ministers discuss military issues**

The defense ministers of nine of the 12 CIS countries met in Moscow on 26 March to discuss military cooperation and integration. No Moldovan representatives attended. The ministers considered plans to strengthen the CIS collective security system, refine joint peacekeeping operations, and improve the CIS air defense system.

### **Military leaders appointed**

According to Belapan, on 28 March General Viktor Samsonov, chief of the Russian general staff was appointed chief of staff for the Coordination of Military Cooperation between the CIS Countries. Leanid Maltsaw, the Belarussian ex-minister of defense, was appointed first deputy chief of the Staff.

### **CIS may develop new peacekeeping body**

On 1 April Interfax reported that a source in the Russian Foreign Ministry revealed a CIS plan to develop a new peacekeeping organization. According to the source, all Commonwealth peacekeeping troops would be subordinate to this headquarters.

### **CIS extends mandate of peacekeeping forces**

As reported by Interfax on 28 March, the Council of CIS Heads of State decided to extend the mandate of the joint peacekeeping forces in Tajikistan by six months to 31 December 1997.

Interfax also carried a story reporting that the security zone controlled by the CIS peacekeeping forces in Abkhazia will be expanded and the peacekeepers' mandate will be extended until 31 July 1997. The security zone controlled by the

forces, which consist only of Russian peacekeepers, will be expanded to the old borders of the Gali district of Abkhazia.

## Newly Independent States: Western Region

By Alex Kim

### **UKRAINE**

#### **Azeri foreign minister Hasanov visits Ukraine**

On 26 March, ITAR-TASS reported that Azeri Foreign Minister Hasan Hasanov came to Ukraine to sign twenty documents concerning the relations between Azerbaijan and Ukraine. One of the document signed deals with Azerbaijan exporting its oil to the West via Ukraine to bypass Russia. The signatories hoped that Russia "would not interfere with plans made by Ukraine and Azerbaijan to build a pipeline across Georgian territory as far as the Black Sea port of Supsa." An appeal was being discussed to be made by Ukraine, Azerbaijan, and Georgia to the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development, asking the EBRD to finance joint projects for the creation of a trans-Caucasian transport corridor and the transportation of oil from Caspian oil deposits to Ukraine and onwards to Europe by oil pipelines or by sea.

#### **Kuchma reviews the CIS summit**

A meeting of CIS heads of state took place in Moscow on 28 March. President Kuchma told UT-1 Television Network on 31 March, "The main point was that the Russian President made no tragedy of the fact that NATO will expand to the east. Therefore, the Russian President does not see anything wrong with the fact that NATO and Ukraine will sign a treaty that will by no means infringe upon Russia's interests." During their one-to-one meeting, Yel'tsin agreed to Kuchma's proposal to place the Black Sea Fleet issue outside the framework of any future treaty. Kuchma said the Russian fleet will be staying in Crimea for five or 10 years, or longer.

During the CIS meeting, Belarus's President Lukashenka proposed that the Belarus and Russia Union should serve as a model for the rest of the CIS, however, President Kuchma strongly disagreed. President Yel'tsin failed to rally other republics to join the union during the summit.

## **BELARUS**

### **Russian Duma invites Belarus Assembly to a joint session**

Interfax reported on 21 March that the Russian State Duma will invite the Belarusian National Assembly to hold a joint session of the two Parliaments in Moscow on 2 April, the first anniversary of the Community of the two countries. At the joint session, the two Parliaments will discuss the details on the transformation of the Community into a Federation (Union) of Russia and Belarus.

### **Yel'tsin approves draft treaty on union with Belarus**

On 31 March, Boris Yel'tsin approved the draft treaty [a watered-downed version of three-page agreement rather than the original 17 pages] on a union between Russia and Belarus. [The two nation will remain sovereign and separate, but they will coordinate their joint policies with a Supreme Council, with leaders from both countries.] The treaty is being prepared to be signed by the Presidents of Russia and Belarus in Moscow on 2 April. (Moscow NTV, 31 Mar 97)

Russia might see the political-military union as justified given the NATO expansion, however, there was a hesitation by Yel'tsin to take tangible steps towards a common currency because the main burden of a monetary union will fall on cash-strapped Russia. The lukewarm reception of the treaty by Yel'tsin reveals that Russia is not ready for an integration with Belarus.

## **MOLDOVA**

### **Rival faction holds separate congress**

According to Infotag (24 March 97), "The Fourth Ordinary Congress of the Social Democratic Party of Moldova (PSDM)" has split into two groups, with each calling themselves "the genuine PSDM." Anatol Taran, the Chairman of the PSDM who was officially elected two years ago, had expelled the organizers of the new PSDM, Deputy Chairmen Oazu Nantoi and Sergiu Bernevec, and Andrei Turcanu. Both PSDM congresses adopted their own amendments of the PSDM Charter which are supposed to be registered officially at the Ministry of Justice. The representatives of the two congresses will have to go to court to settle the legitimacy issue.

### **Moldovan delegation reports after the CIS Moscow summit**

After the CIS summit on 25 March, the Moldovan delegation (President Petru Lucinschi, Premier Ion Ciubuc and Speaker Dumitru Motpan and their ministers) told Basa-Press that Russian Premier Viktor Chernomyrdin promised to get personally involved in the settlement of the Dniester conflict. On 31 March, President Lucinschi reported to Infotag that the CIS summit was attended by a group of Dniester officials but there was no special meeting with the Tiraspol group. On 1 April, ITAR-TASS revealed President Lucinschi's praise of the customs union which Moldova is jointly establishing with Ukraine. The president replied that the union will bring economies of the two countries closer, but it will also facilitate ties with Russia, Belarus and other CIS republics.

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