

**Boston University**

**OpenBU**

<http://open.bu.edu>

---

Institute for the Study of Conflict, Ideology and Policy

The ISCIP Analyst

---

1997-08-20

# The ISCIP Analyst, Volume II, Issue 15

---

<https://hdl.handle.net/2144/11888>

*"Downloaded from OpenBU. Boston University's institutional repository."*

**THE ISCIP ANALYST**  
**Volume 2, Number 15 (August 20, 1997)**

## Russian Federation: Executive Branch

By Susan Cavan

### **PRESIDENCY**

#### **Yel'tsin meets Maskhadov in Moscow**

President Yel'tsin met with Chechen President Aslan Maskhadov on 18 August to discuss Chechnya's political status. According to the BBC (World Service, 18 Aug 97), Yel'tsin claimed he was "prepared to take steps to give Chechnya freedom." It is likely that Yel'tsin envisions certain limits to Chechen freedom and would like to see an agreement with Maskhadov similar to the one reached with Tatarstan's leadership.

#### **Korzhakov book preview a disappointment**

The few excerpts of former presidential bodyguard Alexander Korzhakov's book which have seen print thus far seem more the revelations of a vengeful intimate than the concerned patriot Korzhakov seeks to portray. In fact, *Sovershenno sekretno* (No. 8; Russian Press Digest, 5 Aug 97, via NEXIS) published passages in which Korzhakov described his eventual realization that "he had never liked Yel'tsin as a person." When Korzhakov remained with Yel'tsin despite his removal from the Politburo, "Korzhakov felt sorry for him. He seemed so weak and dejected...."

Perhaps the most publicized passage thus far involves the 1994 incident at Shannon airport, during which Yel'tsin remained aboard his plane instead of attending meeting with the Irish prime minister. While rumors at the time suggested Yel'tsin had been intoxicated, Korzhakov insists that the Russian president suffered a "strong heart attack or mini-stroke." Unexplained is how

Yel'tsin was capable of exiting the plane and speaking with reporters upon his return to Moscow some five hours later.

The book, "Boris Yel'tsin: From Dawn to Sunset," is due to be published this week. Korzhakov had difficulty finding a publisher, which prompted speculation that the security services or government might be pressuring publishing houses to reject the manuscript. A manager from the Mozhaysk printing house commented, however, that they "do not engage in gossip" and that they "shall do without Korzhakov." (Ekho moskvy, 8 Aug 97; FBIS-SOV-97-220)

## **GOVERNMENT**

### **Recent auctions and contradictory comments suggest government division**

The auctions of shares in the Svyazinvest telecommunications company and Norilsk Nickel continue to produce curious responses from government officials. After First Deputy Premier Nemtsov's exchanges with various media outlets and the losing bidders in the Svyazinvest auction, Prime Minister Chernomyrdin ordered an investigation of the auction to avoid "any innuendo in this case." (Interfax, 30 Jul 97; FBIS-SOV-97-211)

First Deputy Premier Chubais, however, claimed that President Yel'tsin had requested the details surrounding the Svyazinvest sale and was satisfied that the auction "was held in compliance with the strict rules which were set." (Interfax, 30 Jul 97; FBIS-SOV-97-211) Yel'tsin's satisfaction with the auctions came into question, however, when he released the head of the State Property Committee, Alfred Kokh, from government service.

The initial comments from the president's press service claimed that Kokh wanted to resign, and that Yel'tsin had praised and thanked him for his service. (Interfax, 13 Aug 97; FBIS-SOV-97-225) Within two days, however, as Yel'tsin was discussing his new state property chief, Maxim Boiko, Yel'tsin evaluated the results of the two recent auctions by claiming, "some banks appear to be closer

to the heart of Alfred Kokh and this is not proper." (ITAR-TASS, 15 Aug 97; NEXIS) In any event, the replacement of Chubais loyalist Kokh with another Chubais supporter, Boiko, suggests there will be little policy change at the State Property Committee.

The Norilsk Nickel auction was initially postponed by the prime minister on the basis of letters he received from the General Prosecutor, Skuratov, and the Minister of Economics, Yasin. Their complaints about the bidding process included violations of procedure and unfairly short notice of the auction to bidders. Chernomyrdin was apparently persuaded to go ahead with the auction, however, after meetings with Oneximbank's Potanin, Chubais and Kokh. (NTV, 5 Aug 97; FBIS-SOV-97-217)

## **MVD**

### **New interior troops commander appointed**

Colonel-General Leonty Shevtsov has been appointed as the new commander of Russian Interior Troops following the resignation of Colonel-General Anatoli Shkirko last month. Shevtsov is the former commander of Russian peacekeeping troops in Bosnia and served as chief of staff for Russian forces in Chechnya from 1994-96. (ITAR-TASS, 11 Aug 97; FBIS-SOV-97-223)

## **Russian Federation: Foreign Relations**

By Chandler Rosenberger

### **Assistance from Iran helps Russia enforce USSR-era law on Caspian**

In light of complaints from Turkmenistan, the Russian government agreed on 7 August to scrap a bilateral deal between Russian and Azeri firms to develop the Caspian oil field of Serdar. But Russia, with backing from Tehran, secured a promise from Ashgabat to adhere to "previously concluded treaties between the

USSR and Iran" until the legal status of the Caspian Sea has been established (Interfax, 1604 GMT, 7 Aug 97; FBIS-SOV-97-219).

The agreement to develop the Serdar field had been signed by Lukoil, Rosneft and Azerbaijan's state oil company on 4 July, in the presence of Russian First Deputy Prime Minister Boris Nemtsov and Azeri president Heydar Aliev, and was immediately protested by Turkmenistan, which claimed that international law of the sea placed the fields within its area of jurisdiction. (See Editorial Digest, July 17, 1997)

Iran, while declining to take sides overtly, then called for adherence to Soviet-era agreements. Iranian deputy foreign minister Mahmud Va'ezi said on 5 August that arguments based on the premise that international law now override previous treaties "are legally unacceptable and invalid." Va'ezi also decried unnamed states that "are behaving in an individualistic manner and signing agreements with foreign firms." (IRNA, 1001 GMT, 5 Aug 97; FBIS-NES-97-217). Two days later, Turkmenistan endorsed the Iranian position when it was put forward again by Russian president Boris Yel'tsin.

Commentators, Foreign Ministry endorse "Eastern" orientation for Russia  
A nearly-unanimous chorus of Russian officials, journalists and scholars has praised the performance of Foreign Minister Yevgeni Primakov at last month's meeting of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), claiming that it marked a welcome shift in Moscow's orientation from West to East.

Primakov's discussion of security issues at ASEAN was a "brilliant diplomatic maneuver" according to Obshchaya gazeta, since he "provided a wonderful way of giving vent to the irritation about the unceremoniousness of American foreign policy which has been building up deep inside ASEAN." Primakov also won the support of Indonesia and Malaysia, the paper reported, since "he did not fail to

note that the actions of Washington-based Tel Aviv are an insult to Muslims." (Obshchaya gazeta, 1 Aug 97; FBIS-SOV-97-217).

Moscow's ties in Southeast Asia, Moskovskiye novosti wrote, come as a welcome antidote to the isolation produced by NATO expansion. "The road to the West has been blocked indefinitely, despite the ceremony of strategic betrothal with NATO that spared our national pride," the paper wrote, noting that the resultant expansion to the East "should not lead our diplomats and politicians to develop an inferiority complex -- it is obvious that the Pacific region will become one of the world's economic (and therefore political) focuses by the beginning of the 21st century." (Moskovskiye novosti, 3-10 Aug 97; FBIS-SOV-97-219).

In an interview with "Iran Daily," Yuri Kashlev, the president of Russia's diplomatic academy, said that Russia must act as a "bridge between different civilizations and economies." While Russia must "integrate and become part of the West," Kashlev said, it should also become part of the world economic system, which includes many non-Western states. Kashlev singled Iran, China and Japan as nations with whom Moscow was cultivating closer ties. (IRNA, 0948 GMT, 6 Aug 97; FBIS-NES-97-218)

Meanwhile, deputy Foreign Minister Grigori Karasin published a seven-page article on the importance of fruitful relations with China. (Problemy dalnego vostoka, Mar-Apr). Yevgeni Bazhanov, director of the Institute of Current International Issues, praised arms sales to Beijing, since they would "gradually bind" Russia's "gigantic neighbor" to the Russian defense industry. "The necessity for spare parts, shells, etc," Bazhanov wrote, "will turn Beijing into our friendly partner for many years." (Obshchaya gazeta, 7-13 Aug 97; FBIS-TAC-97-224).

Czech newspaper, Slovak politician say Russian agents active in Bratislava

Analysts from the Foreign Ministry and the security services of the Czech Republic have concluded that Russian agents use Slovakia as a base for monitoring and influencing politics in Central Europe, according to the Czech daily Denni Telegraf.

In addition, a Slovak opposition politician has claimed that the Slovak intelligence agency is so compromised by Russian agents that Western nations hold it at arms length.

The appointment in 1995 of Ivan Lexa as head of the Slovak Intelligence Service convinced the West that Russia had gained too much influence in Bratislava, according to Vladimir Palko, a former deputy director of the Czechoslovak secret service. Lexa, a confidante of Slovak premier Vladimir Meciar who had close ties to the former regime, inaugurated a return to influence of former agents of the Communist secret police (StB), who "have a natural tendency to orient themselves toward this particular side, as they did 10 years ago... (I)t means that the Slovak Republic's real foreign policy political orientation is an orientation toward Russia." (Sme, 4 Aug 97; FBIS-EEU-97-217).

## **Comment**

### **The "Eurasian" vision fills the "national" void**

Russian Foreign Minister Yevgeni Primakov abhors a vacuum. In any international sphere in which the West has failed to provide confident leadership, Primakov has darted in, fax machines spinning, with proposals and position papers. It should therefore come as no surprise that his ministry is steadfastly filling in gaps in domestic politics as well.

While President Boris Yel'tsin's commission on a new "national idea" has returned from the provinces as confused as when it left, Primakov is building a consensus among Moscow's elite that Russia has a peculiarly "Eastern" mission. The tributes to his performance at the meeting of the Association of Southeast

Asian Nations (ASEAN) are more than merely obsequious; his colleagues at the ministry and collaborators in the press have settled on ties to Asia as the salve for the purportedly "wounded" national pride.

Never mind that in negotiations over the expansion of NATO and future of the G-7, the Western nations have given Moscow a status disproportionate to its standing in world affairs. Since the war in Chechnya began three years ago, all thought of replacing Communist-style imperialism with healthy domestic rebirth has been scrapped. The West's own failure to challenge Russia's hegemonic instincts have allowed the nation's worst elements free to seek a new mission wherever they fancied.

Asia has its own appeal. There a Russian nationalist can find leaders sympathetic to what one commentator has called "another conception of human rights, different from the Western conception." After all, the journalist noted, "even at the height of the Chechen war, Beijing did not reproach Russia (it has a headache with its own "separatists" in Taiwan and Tibet)." The unreformed Communist can be "touched by the red color of the Chinese national flag and the formally unchallenged role of the (Chinese) Communist Party." (Moskovsiye novosti, 3-10 Aug 97; FBIS-SOV-97-219). And such a mission can pay financial dividends. For the price of one scrapped oil deal, Russian-Iranian cooperation has restored the pre-1991 hegemony of Moscow and Tehran over the Caspian Sea.

How will the United States respond to Russia's drift East? Some commentators have noted that the State Department appears to be softening its line against Iran in the hope of outbidding the Russians for influence. But there is another alternative, one that would both restrain Russia's behavior and give heart to Moscow's democrats. The United States could openly condemn Primakov's maneuvers as incompatible with the spirit of a healthy post-imperial Russian restoration, and insist that a peaceful future must be secured by abandoning the

legacy of adventurism. Such a line would come too late for the dead of Tajikistan, Georgia, Moldova and Chechnya, but would better head off future catastrophes than appeasement could.

## Russian Federation: Political Parties and Legislative Branch

By Michael Thurman

### **FEDERAL ASSEMBLY**

#### **Speaker Lukyanov considers Dyachenko's appointment**

The recent appointment of Boris Yel'tsin's daughter Tatyana Dyachenko as presidential adviser has, according to Lukyanov, broken the law on state service. The dispute revolves around Dyachenko's status as state employee rather than personal advisor to the president. Were Yel'tsin to have appointed her as a personal advisor, no law would have been violated. However, as a member of the executive office, Speaker Lukyanov claims that laws have been broken.

The president claims the appointment of his daughter did not violate the law since he, as Russian president, is not a state employee. It would seem that the issue revolves around the status of appointed versus elected state officials as being state employees. Speaker Lukyanov admitted that the applicability of this law to the president -- indeed all elected persons -- is not clear, however the speaker believes the law has been violated. (Sovetskaya rossiya, 3 Jul 97; FBIS-SOV-97-184)

#### **Federation Council forbids the sale of agricultural land**

After much debate, the Federation Council finally passed the bill adopted by the Duma in June 1997. This result is perhaps a combination of the communist majority in the Duma with its agrarian connections, and a regional interest in

maintaining the local power hierarchy. Whether the president signs the law, or even heeds it in the case of a veto override, is not clear.

Large-scale land reform -- via sale or forced redistribution -- does not seem likely. The losers, besides the Russian consumer, are those who would have "forty acres and mule." (Interfax, 1042 GMT, 3 Jul 97; FBIS-SOV-97-184)

## **POLITICAL PARTIES**

### **Gen. Rokhlin is appointed as chairman of movement to support army**

Chairman of the Russian Duma's Defense Committee Gen. Lev Rokhlin is to head a committee whose purpose is the defense of the army. Ex-defense minister Igor Rodionov will be his first deputy.

The creation of the committee raises two interesting issues. First, it is possible that the organizational political power of the army as it is presently constituted is insufficient for its needs, otherwise a special advocacy group would not be needed. Second, the Duma is seen as being an appropriate venue for redress, that is, a dispenser of political patronage. This suggests that the legislative process may be seen by many to be a useful means for attaining their aims. (Interfax, 1110 GMT, 9 Jul 97; FBIS-SOV-97-190)

## **ELECTIONS**

### **Nizhniy Novgorod election results**

The electoral marathon in Nizhniy Novgorod Oblast has ended in a victory for the former mayor, Ivan Petrovich Sklyarov, with 52% of the vote. His opponent, Gennadiy Khodyrev, received 42 [sic] percent. The turnout in this second round (50%) was higher than the first (40%). Sklyarov is former Governor Nemtsov's man. The regional media which first reported the election results see this as a victory not only of Nemtsov's earlier activities in the city, but also of his present job in Moscow and of Yel'tsin's path of reform. (Rossiyskiye vesti, 15 Jul 97; FBIS-SOV-97-197)

# Newly Independent States: CIS

By Mark Jones

## **Mixed signals for peacekeepers in Georgia**

Russian soldiers serving in the CIS peacekeeping troops in Georgia who were hoping to return home in August were put on an emotional roller-coaster recently. As late as 30 July, Russian Foreign Ministry envoy Lev Mironov was saying that the soldiers would begin pulling out on 1 August if Tbilisi did not officially request their continued presence (Interfax, 30 Jul 97; FBIS-SOV-97-211). If the soldiers' hopes were raised by that statement, they were dashed the next day by Lieutenant-General Aleksandr Arinakhin, an assistant to the chief of the Russian General Staff. According to Arinakhin, "Yes, officially, the peacekeepers' mandate in the region ended today but this does not mean that they won't be there tomorrow" (ITAR-TASS, 31 Jul 97; FBIS-UMA-97-212).

This apparent discrepancy in views might be explained as an example of astute politicking by the Foreign Ministry (to put pressure on Georgia), or by a fundamental difference in interpretation of policy by the ministry and the General Staff. What is even more interesting is the discrepancy between the two organizations regarding who has the authority to order a withdrawal. According to Mironov, a decision by all CIS leaders (heads of state) is necessary to terminate the operation (ITAR-TASS, 31 Jul 97; FBIS-SOV-97-212). However, according to Arinakhin, President Yel'tsin, acting as chairman of the Council of Heads of State, can "make such a decision on behalf of the council..." In other words, at least as far as the Russian General Staff is concerned, Boris Yel'tsin is the de facto commander-in-chief of CIS armed forces.

## **Non-peacekeeping in Tajikistan**

Peacekeeping efforts have obviously gone awry in Tajikistan. But as the situation there spirals out of control, a top official at the Russian Defense Ministry told Interfax (11 Aug 97; FBIS-SOV-97-223) that, "The CIS Collective Peacekeeping Forces are not interfering in the armed conflicts in Tajikistan." Prudence, however, required the peacekeepers to set up three "block posts" on the outskirts of Dushanbe complete with "armoured vehicles to evacuate servicemen in case of emergency." The peacekeepers also stationed three tanks near the headquarters of the 201st division "to prevent provocations." The local commander of CIS forces, Boris Dyukov, elaborated on the limits of his authority. According to an interview in Interfax (12 Aug 97; FBIS-SOV-97-224), Dyukov will order his soldiers to protect Tajik military and government sites "only after the CIS leadership makes an official decision to this effect."

## Newly Independent States: Western Region

By Mark Jones

### **MOLDOVA**

#### **Who says we aren't independent?**

Even though not one international organization has recognized the Dniester region of Moldova as an independent republic, leaders there continue to act as if they deserve precisely that recognition. Recently, "border guards" of the unrecognized republic refused to let the Moldovan minister of defense cross into the region because officials in Chisinau did not file the proper papers with officials in Tiraspol. The minister was on his way to attend the Open Doors Day with the group of Russian troops and claimed that, since Dniester is part of Moldova, no coordination was necessary (NTV, 3 Aug 97; FBIS-SOV-97-215). Tiraspol leader Igor Smirnov also called for a law declaring Dniester a "customs control zone." Smirnov's son, Vladimir, who is the chairman of the region's customs committee, said it was necessary for prosecutors, police, customs

officials, and border guards to work more closely to control access roads passing by customs checkpoints (Baspress, 30 Jul 97; FBIS-SOV-97-212).

## **BELARUS**

### **Raising the stakes**

Sergei Posakhaw, an aide to President Lukashenka, told a Radiostantsiya ekho moskvy correspondent that Belarus will station nuclear weapons on its territory "if nuclear weapons were deployed on the territory of NATO's new members" (30 Jul 97; FBIS-TAC-97-211).

### **More fallout from ORT arrests**

The leaders of the Belarusian Association of Journalists (BAJ) protested against the criminal prosecution of Russian television network employees. In a press release, the leaders called the Belarusian authorities' actions, "a blatant manifestation of totalitarianism and a flagrant violation of human rights and freedom of speech" (Belapan, 31 Jul 97; FBIS-SOV-97-212). For his part, President Lukashenka claimed that the Russian journalists were being paid by "foreign special services," but declined to specify which services were involved. Lukashenka also claimed that the detainees were Belarusian, not Russian, citizens (Interfax, 31 Jul 97).

Even Russian President Boris Yel'tsin condemned the actions of the Belarusian authorities, calling Lukashenka "inexperienced" and requesting an explanation of his actions. Lukashenka responded with characteristic anger and paranoia. He canceled a trip to Kaliningrad over the issue (Radio Minsk, 0900 GMT, 1 Aug 97; FBIS-SOV-97-213) and said, "I will provide explanations to Yel'tsin but (only) after he gives me explanations over the war the Russian TV channels have unleashed against me" (FBIS-SOV-97-212). This statement can only cause us to wonder whether the ORT reporters were arrested for "violating the border" as they are charged, or because the president doesn't like their opinions.

### **Erecting fences**

President Lukashenka signed a decree on 30 July (Radio Minsk, 1600 GMT, 30 Jul 97; FBIS-SOV-97-211) implementing measures "to strengthen the guarding of the state border." In accordance with the decree, a border group is being created in Brest in order to improve security on the border with Poland, Lithuania and Latvia. A similar detachment is being set up in Gomel to "organize guarding of the state border with Ukraine." The question is, what is Lukashenka guarding against?

### **UKRAINE**

#### **Udoenko looks westward**

Hennadiy Udoenko, recently re-appointed as foreign minister, gave an interview to Interfax (1 Aug 97; FBIS-SOV-97-213) in which he outlined Ukraine's foreign policy goals. In addition to "laying a foreign policy accent on the economy," Udoenko listed cooperation with the European Union as a priority. He also called for the pursuit of a "strategic policy of gradual integration into European and Euro-atlantic structures."

#### **Problems in parliament**

According to Interfax (30 Jul 97; FBIS-SOV-97-211), President Kuchma's administration is considering dissolving the Ukrainian Supreme Council if it fails to open another session soon. The council suspended its work on 18 July and, according to the Ukrainian Constitution, the president has the authority to dissolve parliament if it does not hold a session within 30 days of its last meeting.

## **Newly Independent States: Caucasus**

By Miriam Lansky

### **AZERBAIJAN**

**Russia and Azerbaijan reach partial agreement on radar station lease**

On 8 August Russian and Azeri authorities initialed a protocol defining the basic principles for the agreement on the lease of the Gabala radar station. Azerbaijani First Deputy Prime Minister Abbas Abbasov explained that the protocol recognizes the station, its movable equipment, and the land it occupies as Azerbaijani property. Abbasov also stated that a number of unspecified aspects remain to be settled before the agreement can be signed. Presidents Geyder Aliev and Boris Yel'tsin were scheduled to sign the agreement during Aliev's July visit to Moscow but did not. Some believe that the Azerbaijani side refused to sign the document because Russia has failed to extradite Azerbaijan's former president, Ayaz Mutalibov, who is accused of plotting coup attempts against Aliev. (Turan, 8 Aug 97; FBIS-SOV-97-221)

The Gabala station monitors air space for Russian nuclear forces and, according to Colonel General Viktor Smirnov, commander of the Russian air defense troops, "is a latest generation station," one that is "immensely significant for Russia's defense capability." (Turan, 2 Aug 97; FBIS-SOV-97-216) Since 1991 Russia has accumulated an unpaid debt of 100 billion rubles to Azerbaijan for the electricity and water that the station uses.

### **US OSCE representative raises land swap possibility for Karabakh**

A proposal first put forth by Academician Andrei Sakharov in 1989 and revived later by US expert Paul Goble has been taken up a third time by John Maresca, the US representative to the OSCE Minsk Group. (Azadlyg, 8 Aug 97; FBIS-SOV-97-220) Deputy Prime Minister of Turkey Bulent Ecevit also put forward this idea recently, while the US Deputy Secretary of State, Strobe Talbott, has voiced doubt that this "prospect holds out very much hope." (FDCH Political Transcripts, 21 Jul 97)

The proposal consists of a land swap: the Lachin corridor, which connects Armenia to Nagorno-Karabakh, would be traded for the Mergi district, which connects Azerbaijan to Nakhichevan. By making Azerbaijani and Armenian

territories contiguous, this arrangement would ease the security concerns for the Armenian population of Nagorno-Karabakh and the Azeri population of the Nakhichevan exclave. Moreover, Azerbaijan would gain a direct path to Turkey's border, and therefore a path for oil pipeline construction that avoids Armenia, Georgia, and Russia. One major difficulty with the plan is that Armenia has never admitted that its forces participated in the war over Nagorno-Karabakh, and is therefore under no obligation to cede anything to the other parties. While it is conceivable that the population of the Lachin area (which has now been thoroughly cleansed of its pre-war Azeri and Kurd inhabitants), may not object to integration into Armenia, there is no reason to suppose that those residing in the Mergi region would want to be transferred to Azerbaijan's jurisdiction.

## **GEORGIA**

### **Shevardnadze and Ardzinba support different Russian proposals**

Georgian President Eduard Shevardnadze stated on 1 August that President Yel'tsin's outline of key principles for a settlement of the conflict in Abkhazia, which was issued on the same day, "presages the final solution to the peace-makers problem." Shevardnadze summarized those principles as "Return of refugees, territorial integrity of Georgia, broad rights of Abkhazia within the framework of the united Georgian state, a corresponding division of powers and the use of Russian practices as an example." (ITAR-TASS, 1 Aug 97; FBIS-SOV-97-213) The Abkhaz side favors a different Russian proposal embodied in a protocol negotiated by Foreign Minister Yevgeni Primakov and Abkhaz President Vladislav Ardzinba. (Interfax, 4 Aug 97; FBIS-SOV-97-217) Primakov's proposal includes no mention of Georgian territorial integrity but would require the Abkhaz to honor an April 1994 UN mediated agreement on the gradual return of refugees to Abkhazia. In view of these fundamental differences, the 14 August declaration signed by Shevardnadze and Ardzinba in Tbilisi pledging the non-use of force to settle the dispute can only be seen as a largely symbolic exercise that commemorates the five-year anniversary of the war's start.

Since Shevardnadze's trip to the US in July, the Russian side has intensified its mediation efforts hoping to forestall western involvement and remain the sole mediator of the Abkhaz conflict. As part of his 1 August proposal, Yel'tsin invited Ardzinba and Shevardnadze to Moscow to hammer out the details of the peace. The Georgian side has made it clear that such a meeting would have to follow substantial progress on the major issues, including Georgian territorial integrity and the return of refugees.

### **Military contacts**

Russian Defense Minister Igor Sergeev sought a statement from his Georgian counterpart Vardiko Nadibaidze endorsing the presence of Russian peacekeepers in Georgia. The Georgian side refused and insisted on postponing the issue until the next CIS summit, which is scheduled for October. During the same trip to Moscow, Nadibaidze met with Anatolyi Kvashin, chief of the Russian General Staff, and asked him to hand over to Georgia several military facilities including the Aleksaeva military airfield and the Tbilisi tank factory. (Iprinda, 2 Aug 97; FBIS-SOV-97-214)

A few days later the chairman of the US Joint Chiefs of Staff, John Shalikashvili, arrived in Tbilisi for a short visit the purpose of which was to "examine the issues of deepening U.S. Georgian military cooperation." (Rossiyskaya gazeta, 5 Aug 97; FBIS-SOV-97-218).

## **Newly Independent States: Central Asia**

By Monika Shepherd

### **TAJIKISTAN**

#### **Turf war erupts in Dushanbe, spreads west and south**

Early on the morning of 9 August a battle broke out between two rival "pro-government" commanders in the northern district of Dushanbe. The fighting

lasted approximately four hours and involved the supporters of Colonel Suhrob Qosimov, commander of a special rapid reaction brigade in the Tajik Interior Ministry, and the supporters of Yaqubjon Salimov, chairman of the Tajik Customs Committee. Law enforcement agencies sealed the area off and government officials tried to set up negotiations between the two feuding commanders, once the fighting died down and a cease-fire was declared (Interfax, 0848 GMT, 9 Aug 97; FBIS-UMA-97-221). According to initial reports, as a result of this battle five people were killed, and 12 others were wounded (Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran, 1600 GMT, 9 Aug 97; FBIS-SOV-97-221).

Before negotiations could get underway between Qosimov and Salimov, a new battle erupted outside of Dushanbe near the Fakhrobod Pass (approximately 35 km south of Dushanbe), where a group of Col. Mahmud Khudoiberdiev's men clashed with members of the presidential guard (Interfax, 1648 GMT, 9 Aug 97; FBIS-SOV-97-221). Col. Khudoiberdiev's troops took control of the Fakhrobod Pass in June, in an attempt to intimidate the Tajik government into changing the terms of the inter-Tajik peace agreement, which was signed on 27 June by United Tajik Opposition (UTO) leader Said Abdullo Nuri and President Rahmonov (see Editorial Digests for June 1997). Khudoiberdiev supports Salimov's group in the current conflict, and announced that if Qosimov's forces did not leave Dushanbe, he would begin moving additional troops from his base in Qurghon Teppa toward the capital, presumably to aid Salimov and his supporters (Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran, 1600 GMT, 9 Aug 97; FBIS-SOV-97-221).

There are conflicting reports as to whether Col. Khudoiberdiev's forces were actually able to enter Dushanbe. An Interfax report from 9 August stated that his troops had managed to take over military posts in the outskirts of the capital, and that the government forces had surrendered with little resistance and retreated into the city's center (Interfax, 1823 GMT, 9 Aug 97; FBIS-SOV-97-221). General Ghafur Mirzoev, commander of the Presidential Guard, denied all reports that

Col. Khudoiberdiev's men had entered the city, and instead stated that since the morning of 10 August, the colonel's forces had made three attacks on Presidential Guard units, in an attempt to break into Dushanbe. According to General Mirzoev, none of these attacks was successful (ITAR-TASS, 1125 GMT, 10 Aug 97; FBIS-SOV-97-222). On the same day, Col. Qosimov managed to rout Salimov and his supporters and drive them out of the city (Radiostantsiya ekho moskvy, 1200 GMT, 10 Aug 97; FBIS-SOV-97-222). Salimov and most of his men fled west, into the mountains and toward the Uzbek-Tajik border. The Uzbek government responded by closing that section of its border and by putting its border guards on alert (RFE/RL Newline, 12 Aug 97). Col. Qosimov and General Mirzoev are also reported to have moved some of their troops westward, to the town of Tursunzade, the site of a large aluminum plant which has been occupied by Col. Khudoiberdiev's forces since January 1996. Qosimov's and Mirzoev's men apparently managed to regain control of the plant, and Col. Khudoiberdiev's troops fled into the mountain gorges surrounding the nearby towns of Shakhrinau and Hissar (Interfax, 0928 GMT, 11 Aug 97; FBIS-SOV-97-223). Gen. Mirzoev announced that his units would not remain in Tursunzade, but would allow local authorities to restore order in the area (ITAR-TASS, 1217 GMT, 11 Aug 97; FBIS-SOV-97-223). Qosimov and his troops remained in the vicinity, ostensibly to conduct a "mop-up" operation in the surrounding towns and villages, in order to destroy the last remnants of resistance by Col. Khudoiberdiev's troops (NTV, 0400 GMT, 11 Aug 97; FBIS-SOV-97-223).

However, there were also reports that Qosimov's men began carrying out reprisals against members of the local population whom they suspected of having aided and/or sympathized with Col. Khudoiberdiev's and Yaqubjon Salimov's supporters. Uzbeks and "Leninabadtsy" (people originally from the northern Tajik oblast' Leninobod) were singled out and beaten, raped, and, in some cases, summarily executed. There were also reports that Qosimov's forces had set up checkpoints on the road from Tursunzade to Dushanbe and were

stopping and harassing anyone suspected of being Uzbek or from Leninobod Oblast' (RFE/RL Newswire, 14 Aug 97).

Meanwhile, General Mirzoev's Presidential Guard units launched an all-out attack on Col. Khudoiberdiev's forces to the south, in an attempt to push the colonel out of his stronghold in Qurghon Teppa. Mirzoev's men briefly regained control of the Fakhrobod Pass on 12 August, but had to retreat to their previous positions (near the village of Gagarin, 12 km south of the capital) when Khudoiberdiev's troops counterattacked. Mirzoev's units met with greater success near Qurghon Teppa , however, when they succeeded in taking control of Sarband (formerly known as Kalininabad), a village only 10 km east of Col. Khudoiberdiev's headquarters (Interfax, 1753 GMT, 12 Aug 97; FBIS-SOV-97-224).

On 13 August, President Rahmonov issued a decree stripping the colonel of his command, but apparently promised to transfer him to another government position (Interfax, 1826 GMT, 13 Aug 97; FBIS-SOV-97-225). The two men finally met face-to-face in a location south of Dushanbe on the same day, and in addition to agreeing to give up his command, Col. Khudoiberdiev also agreed to a truce (Interfax, 1107 GMT, 14 Aug 97; FBIS-SOV-97-226). In accordance with the truce, the colonel withdrew his forces from the Fakhrobod Pass and the highway between Dushanbe and Qurghon Teppa was reopened (NTV, 0500 GMT, 14 Aug 97; FBIS-SOV-97-226).

However, even though Col. Khudoiberdiev initially agreed to comply with the president's decree, the Autonomous Defense Council of the Khatlon and Qurghon Teppa zones (a council of local southern commanders loyal to Col. Khudoiberdiev which was formed on 20 July and which has been declared illegal by the Tajik government) rejected President Rahmonov's order (Interfax, 1641 GMT, 13 Aug 97; FBIS-SOV-97-225). Furthermore, already one day after his meeting with President Rahmonov, Col. Khudoiberdiev seemed to be rethinking his response to the truce agreement. In an interview with Russian NTV, he

frankly admitted that he had not yet begun to implement the terms of the truce in Qurghon Teppa , because government troops were continuing to advance on his headquarters from the nearby town of Sarband (NTV, 0500 GMT, 14 Aug 97; FBIS-SOV-97-226).

### **Comment**

Perhaps the greatest danger which faces Tajikistan today is the power struggle between military commanders who are nominally loyal to the government, but mainly concerned with preserving and/or strengthening their spheres of influence, now that the final peace agreement between the current Tajik government and the UTO has been signed, and a new government is to be formed. The prospect that political stability may take hold in Tajikistan is not necessarily cause for celebration on the part of many local government commanders, because it means that their services might no longer be needed. The loss of their positions as military commanders would also mean the loss of the local fiefdoms which many of them have managed to build up over the course of the war. Furthermore, competition for civilian administrative positions has become much fiercer, now that the new government is to include the UTO. It is not clear exactly what sparked the battle between Yaqubjon Salimov and Colonel Qosimov -- some reports say that violence broke out after one of Qosimov's relatives was killed by one of Salimov's supporters (Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran, 1600 GMT, 9 Aug 97; FBIS-SOV-97-221), and other accounts state that the shooting was simply the result of a turf war between two of Dushanbe's more powerful mafia bosses. Ironically, Qosimov and Salimov used to be allies. They were both strong supporters of former President Nabiev and they were both members of the Popular Front militia, which was formed in early summer 1992. Salimov's connection to Col. Khudoiberdiev is also not entirely clear, but perhaps Salimov had strong ties to members of Khudoiberdiev's Autonomous Defense Council, many of whom were also in the Popular Front militia.

Fortunately, the CIS peacekeepers and Russian military and border guard units stationed in Tajikistan have thus far been able to avoid becoming involved in the latest round of violence. The CIS peacekeeping command assisted in negotiating a cease-fire between Salimov and Qosimov (ITAR-TASS World Service, 1142 GMT, 9 Aug 97; FBIS-SOV-97-221), and was also instrumental in setting up the meeting between President Rahmonov and Col. Khudoiberdiev on 13 August (NTV, 0800 GMT, 13 Aug 97; FBIS-SOV-97-225). The UTO has also declared its neutrality and has urged the two sides to negotiate a peaceful end to the conflict (Clandestine Voice of Free Tajikistan, 0350 GMT, 11 Aug 97; FBIS-SOV-97-223). It would appear, however, that Uzbekistan may bear some responsibility for Col. Khudoiberdiev's actions. As mentioned in a previous Editorial Digest (July 23, 1997), there have been rumors that Uzbekistan supplied aid to Khudoiberdiev. Whether there is any truth to these rumors, Col. Qosimov certainly seems to believe that it is the primarily the Uzbeks and the "Leninabadtsy" who have been supporting Khudoiberdiev's forces in western Tajikistan in the vicinity of Tursunzade and Hissare. (Note: Khujand is the capital of Leninobod Oblast' and the Khujandis are suspected of being responsible for the attempt on Uzbekistan.) Qosimov's actions may presage another government crackdown in Leninobod Oblast' itself, once the current conflict has been resolved.

## Newly Independent States: Baltic States

By Kate Martin

### **All for one?**

Unlike the European Union, which began membership talks with only one Baltic State, Estonia, NATO should approach all three Baltic states together, according to Keith Smith, the Clinton administration's nominee for US Ambassador to Lithuania. In his confirmation hearings in late July, Smith aligned himself with the adamant pro-NATO stance of Secretary of State Madeleine Albright, and said he

planned to "work very vigorously" to help the Baltic states prepare for inclusion in the alliance. (Federal News Service, July 29, 1997; NEXIS)

Military preparedness will be a major stumbling block to such inclusion, however. According to Colonel Zenonas Vegelevicius, commander of the Lithuanian air force, that service is still unable to repel an attack by air. He cites the need for vehicles, landing locations, and a threefold increase (from 1,000 to 4,000) of troops. (ELTA, 0644 GMT, 30 Jul 97; FBIS-UMA-97-211). His colleague, Major Gediminas Sneideris, who led the Lithuanian contingent in the international Cooperative Safeguard exercises in Iceland earlier this month, said that the lack of modern, NATO-compatible military equipment and communication skills (i.e., English language) caused some difficulties for the Lithuanian troops taking part. (ELTA, 1536 GMT, 5 Aug; FBIS-UMA-97-217).

Copyright Boston University Trustees 1997

Unless otherwise indicated, all articles appearing in this journal were written especially for

*Analyst*. This article was originally published at

<http://www.bu.edu/iscip/digest/vol2/ed15.html>.