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Russian Federation: Executive Branch

By Susan Cavan

PRESIDENCY

Documentary reveals past Yel'tsin health problems

On the second anniversary of President Yel'tsin's heart bypass surgery, 5 November, NTV presented a documentary titled "Yel'tsin's Heart," which featured members of the president's medical team, his family and a few former government and Kremlin officials. (NTV, 1640 GMT, 5 Nov 98; FBIS-SOV-98-309) Among the revelations in the piece was a statement by Yel'tsin's former personal physician, Vladlen Vtorushin, that Yel'tsin has had five heart attacks since July 1995. According to the program's host, Svetlana Sorokina, Yel'tsin suffered two of those heart attacks during his 1996 re-election campaign.

After the election and inauguration, Yel'tsin was kept isolated, even from his then new Press Secretary Sergei Yaztrzhembsky, who fed the media health reports based on information from other Kremlin apparatchiks. During this time, Yel'tsin's doctors and family tried to persuade him to allow a diagnostic test that would reveal the extent of the damage to his heart. According to Naina Yel'tsin, "He must have feared to hear the verdict because he did not want to undergo that procedure. He kept postponing it all the time."

Yel'tsin finally acceded to the procedure on 15 August. The results, which became known, revealed not only his need for the bypass, but also the impossibility of performing the operation until Yel'tsin's health could be enhanced. According to Yaztrzhembsky, the landmark decision to be frank with the media on the subject of the president's health came at the prompting of advisers Valentin Yumashev and Tatiana Dyachenko, who persuaded Yaztrzhembsky to

suggest (in writing) to the president that "he himself make an announcement about the forthcoming procedure."

The pressure placed on the doctors involved in the operation (one of whom, Renat Akchurin, found out about his selection for the team from the televised report of Yel'tsin's announcement) was heightened by the threat, clearly stated the day before the operation, that if anything happened to Yel'tsin, the surgeons would be "detained until further investigation."

The documentary also dealt in some detail with the president's reputation as a difficult patient. Aside from his anxiousness about signing over his presidential authority to Chernomyrdin for the duration of the operation, Yel'tsin's insistence at cutting short his recovery period was also emphasized by physicians and family alike. Naina Yel'tsin described the problem: "Doctors begged him to stay a little longer, because intensive therapy is a serious thing. This is his curse. He said he had to go. And it has always been like that, you see. If he had only listened to the doctors...."

APPARAT

Details, details...

In an interview with Ekho Moskv (1710 GMT, 28 Oct 98; FBIS-SOV-98-301) Presidential Press Secretary Dmitri Yakushkin addressed many questions regarding the president's health, but also provided some insight about the preparation of press clippings and summations for the president. Despite assurances early in the interview that the president "watches television regularly and reads the press," Yakushkin eventually described the "digests" Yel'tsin receives from his staff and others.

A staffer from the Presidential Press Service compiles "reviews" of media stories covering two broad categories: "first and foremost, everything concerning the President"; and "main topics," encompassing both international and domestic

affairs. While Yakushkin claimed that there are no "taboos" as to what should or should not be included in these press reports, he also noted that the press service does attempt to "limit the number of pages" submitted to the president for ease of consumption.

The Press Service is by no means the only conduit of media information for the president. Yakushkin also made reference to other digests created for Yel'tsin, including those on domestic affairs drawn up by the law enforcement agencies, and the one on international issues produced by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA).

GOVERNMENT

A god of apparat intrigue

A recent profile in *Moskovsky komsomolets* (29 Oct 98, pp. 1, 5; FBIS-SOV-98-310) of Prime Minister Yevgeni Primakov labeled the new PM as "a god of apparat intrigue" throughout his long career in the Soviet and Russian bureaucracies. Of particular interest was an anecdote concerning Primakov's actions during the weeks between Kirienko's resignation and his own confirmation as prime minister.

Apparently Chernomyrdin's political struggle to reclaim his premiership in late August and early September occupied him sufficiently that routine meetings of the power ministries fell off his radar screen. In the interim, a struggle ensued between then head of the Security Council, Andrei Kokoshin, who wanted the meetings held in his office in the Kremlin, and Primakov, who preferred the meetings take place at the MFA offices. According to MK, the power ministers went to the MFA.

Also of interest to those attempting to gauge the level of Primakov's presidential ambitions, MK claims that in November 1990, as Mikhail Gorbachev was considering who to appoint as his "deputy" (vice president), he settled on

Primakov, but eventually changed his mind and named Gennadi Yanaev. One can only imagine what the current PM thinks of what might have been....

SECURITY ORGANS

FSB

Suffering from attention deficit?

That Vladimir Putin retained his position as director of the FSB after the confirmation of Primakov as PM may have less to do with Primakov's faith in Putin, than a general disinterest in this particular branch of security services. According to an article by Yevgeni Miklashevsky in *Nezavisimaya voyennoye obozreniye* (No. 42, 6-12 Nov 98; FBIS-SOV-98-313), after the president's July decree ordering the restructuring of the FSB (see previous digests), "the department's entire personnel was sent on indefinite leave, where it remains to this day."

According to Miklashevsky's article, despite FSB successes and praise for the service, its personnel are subject to significant wage arrears and fundamental resources of the security organization have been, and continue to be, siphoned off to other security agencies. One can extrapolate from this piece that a de facto re-amalgamation of the power ministries may occur through the dismantlement of the FSB and the incorporation of its most useful elements into the MVD and FIS. This attempt at a reconcentration of security service forces, along with other, earlier efforts dating from the first days of Yel'tsin's triumph over the Soviet regime, may yet reveal an awkward truth of Yel'tsin's style of governance.

Russian Federation: Foreign Relations

By John McDonough and Sarah Miller

Where in the world is Abdullah Ocalan?

Italy, of course! Late October marked the beginning of the "Where in the World is Abdullah Ocalan" game that appeared to have no end in sight until the leader of the Workers Party of Kurdistan (PKK) turned up in Rome last week. Ocalan had been in hiding ever since he was ousted from Syria a month earlier. Turkish authorities made repeated demands to Moscow to hand over the leader of the rebel group once they had "established" that Ocalan was in Russia. These demands seemingly fell on deaf ears as Prime Minister Primakov simply affirmed that Moscow would not give asylum to any terrorist leaders and made no other promises to Ankara concerning Ocalan. The Russian ambassador to Turkey reiterated Primakov's stand following the Russian Duma's vote to grant Ocalan asylum in Russia. Ambassador Lebedev told the Turkish press that, "I condemn the decision of the State Duma. However, that decision won't have an effect over the policy which has been pursued up until now by the Russian Government concerning the issue." (Anatolia, 0833 GMT, 5 Nov 98; FBIS-WEU-98-309)

What Ambassador Lebedev failed to mention, or perhaps did not know, was that the Russians were probably making plans for Ocalan's trip to Italy, where the leader of the PKK appeared only a week after these official statements. Ocalan may in fact not have been in Russia in early November but rather on a Russian military base in Armenia. According to a Turkish paper, Turkish intelligence units had determined that the PKK leader was moved to a Russian base in Armenia after his whereabouts in Russia were ascertained. (Hurriyet, 29 Oct 98; FBIS-WEU-98-303) Although such a scenario is intriguing and would certainly be viable given the close relationship between Moscow and Yerevan, the simple fact of the matter is that Ocalan arrived in Rome on an Aeroflot flight that originated in Russia.

The winner, so far, in the "Where in the World is Abdullah Ocalan" game is Ocalan himself. It appears as though Ocalan's travel itinerary was meticulously planned. It just so happens that Italy has a law against extraditing anyone to a country with capital punishment, for example a country like Turkey.

Moscow plays catch-up, invites Mideast players to Kremlin

In attempt to revive the Russian role in the ongoing Middle East peace discussions, Moscow hosted the secretary-general of the executive of the Palestine Liberation Organization and co-chairman of the Russian-Palestinian working committee on the Middle East, Mahmud 'Abbas (Abu Mazin), on 6 November. (ITAR-TASS, 1106 GMT, 5 Nov 98; FBIS-SOV-98-309) Moscow has repeatedly emphasized that Russia is a co-sponsor of the Middle East peace process even though it has been left out of the most recent negotiations. The talks between Foreign Minister Ivanov and the Palestinian representatives on 6 November constituted one of several Russian attempts to highlight their country's role in the peace process. Issued nearly simultaneously with the 6 November meeting was a press release stating that the foreign minister of Israel, Ari'el Sharon, accepted a Kremlin invitation to visit Moscow in late November. Moscow's public relations campaign to "establish" its role in the peace process culminated in a press release from ITAR-TASS, the main government information agency, noting that the head of the Palestinian diplomatic mission in the Russian Federation had pointed out Russia's inconspicuous but highly important role at the Palestinian-Israeli talks. In an interview with ITAR-TASS, the Palestinian representative emphasized that "it was precisely the Russian side that helped bring the delegations' positions closer together." (ITAR-TASS, 1150 GMT, 6 Nov 98; FBIS-SOV-98-310)

It's official: Russian foreign policy is more governmental than presidential Vladimir Lukin, chairman of the Russian Duma committee for international affairs, stating what to many appears to be the obvious, said that Russia's current foreign policy is more governmental than presidential. Lukin's statement served primarily to highlight the close relationship between Prime Minister Primakov and Foreign Minister Ivanov but was also critical of the government's current foreign policies. Lukin said that, for the first time ever, the foreign minister had been appointed on the prime minister's recommendation and therefore Russian foreign

policy "is so far governmental." Having established who was really conducting foreign policy, Lukin went on to attack Russia's current foreign policy. Lukin said that "the louder we shout that we are a great power, the further we are from this status." (Interfax, 0753 GMT, 4 Nov 98; FBIS-SOV-98-308)

Don't forget Libya

Russian foreign ministry spokesman Vladimir Rakhmanin told a briefing on 3 November that all parties concerned should expedite the trial of the Lockerbie case in an effort to lift the sanctions in place against Libya. Calling attention to the humanitarian consequences of the sanctions, Rakhmanin stated that an overwhelming majority of the Security Council's members went on record for an early implementation of Resolution 1192 which would lead to the actual end of the sanctions and the closure of the case. (ITAR-TASS, 1612 GMT, 3 Nov 98; FBIS-SOV-98-307) Although the foreign ministry provided no other details on Russian involvement in mediation efforts of the Lockerbie case, the renewed Russian support for the elimination of sanctions comes less than two months after a high-level Russian delegation visited Tripoli.

The summit succeeds: Primakov and Obuchi are 'friends'

After months of speculation and one postponement, Russian President Boris Yel'tsin and Japanese Prime Minister Keizo Obuchi concluded a two-day summit on 13 November in Moscow. Although the ailing Russian president was unable to attend the signing of the Moscow Declaration, Prime Minister Yevgeni Primakov was handily available to stand in Yel'tsin's place. Following the signing, Primakov pointed to the document as evidence of a "constructive partnership" and referred to Obuchi as "my friend." (This congenial announcement comes just a week before the two will attend the APEC forum at which Primakov will accept Russia's admission into that body.) The contents of the Moscow Declaration are nothing new: an agreement on economic cooperation and the establishment of two committees to agree on the border issue. The latter decision indicates little movement on the disputed Kurile Islands. In fact, Yel'tsin's official reply was

simply a reiteration of the status quo: de jure Russian control but continued economic cooperation. In addition to the Moscow Declaration, the two signed other documents on joint cooperation in energy, tourism, telecommunications, the environment and investment, indicating that although the Kuriles are still Russian, the two countries can still be friends. (Russia Today, 13 Nov 98; www.russiatoday.com)

Russian Federation: Domestic Issues and Legislative Branch

By Michael Thurman

REGIONS

Volga cities sign cooperation agreement

The heads of seven cities in the Volga region signed an agreement in Samara to set up an association of Volga cities. Its members at present are Samara, Nizhny Novgorod, Kazan, Ulyanovsk, Saratov, Cheboksary, and Penza, but other regional centers in the Volga valley are free to join. The mayor of Samara, Georgi Limansky, was elected president of the association.

The ostensible purpose of the agreement is to coordinate policies for combating the recent economic and political crises. Although 11 regions in the Volga valley have been cooperating with each other within the framework of the Greater Volga Association (one of the "super regions"), this recent agreement establishes direct links between the major cities themselves. (ITAR-TASS, 0731 GMT, 28 Oct 98; FBIS-SOV-98-302)

It is not immediately clear what the relationship between the regional and municipal associations will be, i.e., if the latter is to be housed administratively within the former. But the project is in accord with the wider developments of

increasing devolution of political authority and public administration, and it is congruent with the increasingly apparent split between regional and municipal authorities with regard to their respective relationships with Moscow. The regions are pushing for more autonomy within the federation, while city administrators, fearing potential gubernatorial abuses of power, seek to ensure a substantial role for Moscow. Whether this new associative arrangement among the Volga cities can become, or is intended to be, a vehicle for the furtherance of municipal concerns at the expense of the regions remains to be seen.

FEDERAL ASSEMBLY

Duma factions counted

The ephemeral nature of Russian parliamentary factions being what they are, it is necessary to count noses periodically in the State Duma. As of the first of October 1998, the seats in the Duma are distributed as follows: Communist Party faction -- 131 deputies; Our Home Is Russia faction -- 66 deputies; Liberal Democratic Party of Russia faction -- 50 deputies; People's Power deputy group -- 45 deputies; Yabloko faction -- 44 deputies; Russian Regions deputy group -- 43 deputies; Agrarian deputy group -- 36 deputies. (ITAR-TASS, 0919 GMT, 4 Nov 98; FBIS-SOV-98-308)

CONSTITUTIONAL COURT

Court bans Yel'tsin from candidacy in 2000

Doing everyone a favor, especially the perpetually ill Boris Nikolayevich, the Constitutional Court has finally ruled that Yel'tsin is in fact serving his second term in office and is therefore constitutionally banned from running for the presidency in 2000. Armed with this knowledge, the pretenders to his throne may begin lining up for the next election. (ITAR-TASS, 0900 GMT, 5 Nov 98; FBIS-SOV- 98-309)

The court ruling actually changes nothing, since Yel'tsin has repeatedly stated that he would not run for re-election. But by adjudicating another constitutional

question -- albeit one which will most likely be rendered moot by Boris Yel'tsin's death, incapacitation, or removal from office -- the court can add yet another case to its list of decisions independently deliberated and decided. To Western observers with long histories of judicial independence, such a small step can easily be dismissed or ignored. But in Russia, the independent action however small of a Constitutional Court must be recognized and applauded. It is often forgotten that the American Supreme Court was not born fully developed, and that its greatest innovation -- judicial review -- is a power accreted through decades of judicious use and quiet application. If the Russian Constitutional Court is to survive, it will have to build support in the political, legal, and general communities and this can only happen slowly.

Russian Federation: Armed Forces

By Michael Reardon and Fred Drummond

If at first you don't succeed...buy, buy again

Almost a year ago, in December 1997, two Topol-M missiles (NATO classified as SS-27s) were put in service at Tatishchevo, near Saratov at the Strategic Missile Forces (SMF) base on "a trial basis." (Jamestown Foundation Monitor, 2 Nov 98)

Since the two missiles took their places in the Tatishchevo silos which once held SS-19s and SS-24s, development of the Russian Federation's strategic jewel has progressed very slowly. Whether technology or budget has been the main impediment can be debated; the fact remains there has been only one test of this \$35 million missile since last December -- and on 26 October 1998, it failed. (See Editorial Digest, Vol. III, No. 16) So what's the next step for the Russians? Most reasonable minds would respond, "Component or sub-system redesign" or at the very least, "More testing." Well, there is a third choice: installation of an additional five Topol-M missiles at Tatishchevo.

The third option is exactly what the Russian Federation SMF chose late last month. Maybe the decision to take delivery was based on economics. It gets pretty expensive testing these missiles when they explode on takeoff. Therefore, you could simply put them in operational status on a "trial basis" and defer testing until they are used for actual defense. Or these missiles could be retrofitted in the future if remedies for known deficiencies are found on future tests. Maybe they took these missiles because they bought them at a bargain price, since five missiles that actually worked may have cost more. Of course, price should not be a major concern since the government doesn't appear to be paying the manufacturer, the Votkinsk engineering plant, anyway. (Jamestown Foundation Monitor, 2 Nov 98)

Most probably though, the decision to take delivery was based on political pressure. The schedule that has been announced is to have 10 operational missiles in place by the end of 1998. Even with the economic and political turmoil of the past half-year, the priority on this program has not diminished. In fact, since First Deputy Prime Minister Yuri Maslyukov took office in September, he has been making bold statements (See Editorial Digest, Vol. III, No. 16) on ambitious production rates which "have brought leaders of the Defense Ministry to tears." (Jamestown Foundation Monitor, 2 Nov 98) Therefore, even considering the failed test and slow progress to date, many Russian officials still insist that there will be a complete regiment of 10 Topol-Ms in service by the end of the year. (Jamestown Foundation Monitor, 2 Nov 98; and RFE/RL Newswire, 30 Oct 98)

I would have to agree that it appears the Russian goal of having 10 missiles in silos by the end of the year may be attainable -- as long as there is no clause in the contract specifying that the missiles actually have to work. However, in reality, it may be a while longer before the cloud lifts over this program and the Topol-M becomes a credible strategic asset.

Now it's just a race against mind

A single, simple word scribbled in an infirm hand -- "agreed" -- may be all that is necessary to turn the armed forces of the Russian Federation upside-down, around and sideways. This word was penned by President Boris Yel'tsin on 3 November, on the top of a proposal by Defense Minister Igor Sergeev designed to consolidate the strategic nuclear forces under a single boss and out from under the well-guarded hands of the air force and navy. Understandably, top generals in the navy and air force are less than exuberant at the thought of creating a new command, especially at a time when their services are having to slim down. (RFE/RL Newline, 10 Nov 98) In fact, according to Moskovsky komsomolets, some are ready to present their letters of resignation.

The Sergeev proposal states in part, "It would seem to be expedient to adopt a decision, and to complete in the course of 1999, the transition to a three-branch structure for the Armed Forces (Ground Forces, Air Force, and Navy), along with the simultaneous creation of a Unified High Command for the Strategic Deterrent Forces. Within the Unified High Command should be included the Strategic Rocket Forces (SRF) and the 12th Chief Directorate of the Defense Ministry, along with operational subordination of the sea and air strategic nuclear forces." Sergeev's proposal also outlined the political, economic and military motives and provided a concrete plan to create the new structure. (Moskovsky komsomolets, 10 Nov 98; FBIS-SOV-98-314)

Until now, there has been only talk about reorganization even close to this magnitude. In July 1998, Strategic Missile Troops CINC, Lt. Gen. Vladimir Yakovlev, had suggested that top generals were considering the merger of the missile troops and air force into a single service. (ITAR-TASS, 1708 GMT, 1 Jul 98; FBIS-SOV-98-182). However, Sergeev's proposal and Yel'tsin's acceptance give this latest proposal a good chance for implementation.

Once word got out, opponents began to circle the wagons and mount a revolt of high-ranking uniformed officials against Marshal Sergeev. Interestingly enough, the leader of this counteroffensive appears to be a civilian, First Deputy Defense Minister Nikolai Mikhailov. (Moskovsky komsomolets, 10 Nov 98; FBIS-SOV-98-314) There are almost as many reasons for opposition as there are opponents. The first, which has already been touched on lightly, is that the reorganization upsets service empires. It strikes a blow against the self-esteem of the air force and navy CINCs, both of which would be stripped of their nuclear forces. It also takes "nuclear authority" out from under the General Staff, which has had the role of being in charge of nuclear forces in peacetime and directing their use in wartime.

Another concern, by an even larger audience, is that neither the creation of the Unified High Command nor anything similar has been included in recent defense-related documents -- the Concept for Russian National Security, the law "On Defense," or Yel'tsin's edict last year "On the First Measures To Reform the Russian Federation Armed Forces." (Moskovsky komsomolets, 10 Nov 98; FBIS-SOV-98-314) Also, though nothing has been noted to date, it is pretty clear the State Duma won't be too happy about this end run directly to the president without their knowledge or consent and they could provide ample impediments to its implementation.

It has also been reported that Sergeev is recommending Lt. Gen. Yakovlev to fill the position of commander-in-chief of the new Strategic Deterrent Forces Command. This would give Yakovlev a considerable boost in power and prestige. He would receive the title of first deputy minister, be promoted to army general and gain political influence. And why Yakovlev? Well, maybe Sergeev wants to keep the power in the family. There are some in the defense ministry who report that Sergeev's wife is the sister of Yakovlev's wife. (Moskovsky komsomolets, 10 Nov 98; FBIS-SOV-98-314) Wow, and I only got my brother-in-law a tie for his birthday!

Though it is true that Sergeev's proposal has received an "Agreed" from the president, it is far from being "out of the woods" (or more appropriately, "out of the atmosphere") yet. Considering the president's poor health and diminishing power in the government, Sergeev's office must work quickly to draft a presidential edict before the president changes (or loses) his mind or before it is changed for him.

Show me the money

In the ongoing monetary drama being played out in the Russian Federation, military personnel did get paid for the month of October. Of course, in the West, and back in the days of the USSR, this would not be news. In today's Russia it is big news, of such interest that Russian Prime Minister Yevgeni Primakov announced that the government will report the "fulfillment of its obligations at the end of each month." (ITAR-TASS, 1217 GMT, 31 Oct 98; FBIS-SOV-98-306)

Primakov's statement, however, doesn't mean that all back wages have been paid out -- far from it. The Jamestown Foundation's Monitor, citing an ITAR-TASS release, reported that just over a third of the money allocated for Russia's armed forces for 1998 was paid (31 billion rubles from a 80.4 billion ruble total). Looking at wage arrears specifically, military and civilian personnel are still owed around 9 billion rubles. Also noted was the defense ministry's proposal to double the pay levels for all military members, but not how this might be achieved. (Jamestown Foundation Monitor, 2 Nov 98)

Ironically, this monetary shortage may work against the military's plan to downsize -- as the US has shown, it actually takes money (in the short term) to save money (over the long term). Russia's plan is to reduce the total number of military personnel to 1.2 million by 1 January 1999. (The International Institute for Strategic Studies estimates that Russia had about 1,240,000 service members in early 1998; see the "World Military Balance 1997/98.") Interfax quoted the head of

a logistics department at the Armed Forces General Staff as saying the downsizing effort may be hampered by the shortage of funds. Details were not given, but some likely expenditures might include severance pay and the settling of wage arrears, along with accompanying reorganizational costs. On top of that, there is continued talk of a restructuring of the armed services. (Interfax, 1302 GMT, 4 Nov 98; FBIS-SOV-98-308) (See related digest article above)

Every month the Russian media release stories that dramatically show the dire straits into which the Russian armed forces have sailed. One ongoing story has been of the Baltic Fleet's plight in Kaliningrad. Lack of payments had caused local merchants to stop bakery deliveries, which have only just resumed with an influx of some money from the central government for partial payment of debts owed. The Baltic Fleet also has outstanding bills for electrical and municipal (water) services. (ITAR-TASS, 0922 GMT, 5 Nov 98; FBIS-SOV-98-309) It was these circumstances that led Lithuania, back in September, to offer humanitarian aid to the Kaliningrad military district. The situation has not changed appreciably since then. A similar situation has made life difficult in Stavropol, the receiving site of numerous troop relocations. Relations amongst the civilians and the military in Stavropol have become strained due to the lack of government funds to pay required bills. The heavy military presence is apparently doing little to nothing to help stem the crime rate in the city, which was noted as one particular complaint. (RFE/RL Newswire, 6 Nov 98) This probably shouldn't be surprising, given the next news item; perhaps the troops are now part of the problem.

ITAR-TASS reported that two FAPSI (Russian Federation Government Communications and Information Agency) officers were caught selling arms and ammunition. The news report states that the two men were seen "peddling" pistols, grenades and grenade launchers, and cartridges. (ITAR-TASS, 1525 GMT, 2 Nov 98; FBIS-SOV-98-306) This is by all accounts rather penny ante dealings, but what is interesting is that, first, two officers would be reduced to such petty crime, and second, that the two alleged culprits were a junior officer

and a mid-grade officer (a major and a lieutenant). Perhaps the crime rate in Stavropol (as well as throughout the rest of the federation) is not going down because military and other government personnel are participating in criminal activities. Since no one can depend on an income, it only makes sense that some enterprising folks will find ways to generate some cash flow.

Newly Independent States: CIS

By Sarah Miller

Integration engine restarts?

After months of standstill, integration is beginning to creep back onto the table. In a recent Ekho Moskvyy interview, Presidential Plenipotentiary Representative to the CIS Ivan Rybkin expressed uncanny optimism for CIS integration efforts. In the final moments of the interview, he said, "Changes for the better will not be long in coming." (Ekho Moskvyy, 1118 GMT, 29 Oct 98; FBIS-SOV-98-302)

Integration has been at the top of the CIS agenda since it became evident that disintegration processes were more likely than integration processes. This year's governmental and economic crises have taken their toll on CIS integration efforts. The area most adversely affected appears to be economic integration, which is overseen by the CIS Interstate Economic Committee. In an apparent effort to increase awareness about its activities, the CIS Customs Union Integration Committee announced that it would publish a quarterly report detailing economic and humanitarian efforts in the CIS. (Radio Tajikistan, 0500 GMT, 26 Oct 98; FBIS-SOV-98-307) However, this committee comprises only 5 of the 12 CIS member states (Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Russia and Tajikistan). Military integration has had more successes than its economic counterpart. Joint air defense exercises have been completed in recent months and plans for future efforts are underway; but again, economics necessitate further efforts. Presidential Deputy Chief Yevgeni Savostyanov told a group of CIS defense ministry officials at a recent meeting in Moscow that not one CIS

state "is economically capable of independently guaranteeing effective air defense." His argument for further integration hinged on NATO's eastward expansion and the simple truth that "collective efforts to guarantee national security will remain the most rational and promising in the near future." (Interfax, 1051 GMT, 29 Oct 98; FBIS-UMA-98-302) How and if these efforts -- economic and military -- will translate into concrete change has yet to be seen.

Anti-terrorism a CIS priority

The Tajik government has called upon CIS nations to "help organize the search and detention of the rebels" involved in the recent North Tajikistan rebellion as well as those "involved in a number of other acts of terrorism and sabotage" in Tajikistan. The hunt is centered in Tajikistan and Uzbekistan, but the entire CIS has been summoned to lend a technical hand. The government pointed to "the fraternal assistance of CIS countries [as] a key factor in the advancement of the peace process in Tajikistan." Russia and Uzbekistan are expected to provide the bulk of the assistance to the Tajiks since the rebels are believed to be in the Uzbek capital Tashkent and Russia can offer the resources of its security services. (Interfax, 1401 GMT, 9 Nov 98; FBIS-SOV-98-313)

Newly Independent States: Western Region

By Tammy Lynch

UKRAINE

We prefer the missiles, thank you

The foreign ministry last week lashed out at the Russian Duma for its refusal to ratify an agreement that would allow Russia to lease the antimissile early-warning system in Sevastopol. The ministry warned of "negative consequences." A statement said the action, as well as "anti-Ukrainian remarks" made during debate on the agreement, "cannot be interpreted other than as territorial claims to Ukraine," and showed that "certain forces in the Russian parliament do not

want to put up with existing realities and are unaware of negative effects from such actions." (Interfax, 1721 GMT, 1 Nov 98; FBIS-SOV-98- 306)

During debate on the agreement, leftist Duma deputies were clear about their reasons for not ratifying the measure. "If we ratify the agreement," said Deputy Georgi Tikhonov, "we shall confirm that Sevastopol is the property of Ukraine. We shall just give it to Ukraine as a present." (ITAR-TASS, 1231 GMT, 23 Oct 98; FBIS-UMA-98-316) Tikhonov, of course, made no mention of the fact that Sevastopol sits deep in Ukrainian territory, as recognized by President Boris Yel'tsin in 1991. Nor did he, or those in the majority against ratification, mention the needs of Russian national security, dismissing concerns over the deterioration of Russia's antimissile early-warning potential.

Russia's national security was not overlooked in Ukraine, however. Ukrayina Moloda, a Kyiv daily newspaper closely aligned with the government, spelled out the possible responses by Ukraine. After alluding to Latvia's decommissioning of an antimissile early-warning station on its territory, the paper noted that Russia "has not paid a single cent to us for the lease over these three years," and pointed out that the Sevastopol station "is much more needed by ... Russia. Therefore, it would be easier for Russia to ratify the agreement than wait until Ukraine eliminates the station." (Ukrayina Moloda, 4 Nov 98, p. 2; FBIS-UMA-98-316)

Not surprisingly, the Russian Duma has also refused to ratify the Russian-Ukrainian treaty recognizing Ukraine's territorial integrity, borders and independence.

'Money emission' trial balloon crashes

On 31 October, the IMF released the second tranche of a \$2.2 billion Extended Fund Facility loan to Ukraine. The tranche of \$78.3 million was less than the \$125 million originally planned, however. Most importantly, the IMF delegation

that had been meeting in Ukraine left without reaching an accord on distribution of the next tranche. They are expected to return in several weeks, when more "economic statistics" are available.

The IMF praised Ukraine for its work to lower the budget deficit, as well as the level of the country's net assets, but sharply criticized the delay in drafting both the 1999 budget and new tax laws. (ITAR-TASS, 1844 GMT, 2 Nov 98; FBIS-SOV-98-306, and ITAR-TASS, 0650 GMT, 7 Nov 98; FBIS-SOV-98-311)

President Kuchma's latest economic policy trial balloon did not earn any praise, either. It did, however, demonstrate Kuchma's concern about the precariousness of the non-Communist hold on the presidency. On 29 October, Kuchma suggested that it may be necessary for Ukraine to print money in order to pay wage arrears and pensions. If the elderly do not receive their pensions, he warned, they may vote for a Communist in the upcoming presidential election. (Jamestown Foundation Monitor, 3 Nov 98) IMF representatives made it clear, however, that in order to receive IMF money, Kuchma will have to find some other way to appease pensioners and, even more important, state workers who are owed significant back wages.

After Kuchma retreated from his "money emission" statement, the World Bank announced that it would release a \$70 million tranche to Ukraine. The bank has granted Ukraine a loan totaling over \$900 million. Meanwhile, Kuchma has ordered his government to "work out urgent measures and submit concrete estimates for securing funding for all current payments and wage arrears." (ITAR-TASS, 1907 GMT, 2 Nov 98; FBIS-SOV-98-306)

Kuchma can at least point to one triumph; Ukraine has become the first former Soviet republic to see its currency stabilize since the latest crisis began. The currency strengthened slightly last week, to 3.475 hryvnias to the dollar. The hryvnia had been trading above its set fluctuation corridor of 2.5-3.5. In addition,

it is now possible to buy dollars freely at currency exchange booths. (Jamestown Foundation Monitor, 3 Nov 98)

Somebody wants us!

President Kuchma last week announced that Ukraine had signed a new program of cooperation with NATO, covering the period of 1999-2001. The program was based on the NATO-Ukraine Special Partnership Charter, signed in 1997.

Kuchma called the new program, which will, among other things, provide for joint activities in foreign policy, defense research and space exploration, "the most comprehensive and far-reaching" of all the NATO partner programs. NATO also announced that it would station two liaison officers in Kyiv, in order to "enhance joint activities." (Jamestown Foundation Monitor, 11 and 13 Nov 98)

The new agreement with NATO was especially welcomed by Kuchma in light of the cool reception he received just two weeks earlier at a meeting with European Union leaders. Kuchma had gone to the EU in Vienna in hopes of hearing assurances that Ukraine would soon receive associate member status in the organization. Such assurances were not forthcoming, in spite of the fact that all other countries of the region, including Slovenia, Bulgaria, Romania, Poland, and Hungary, have been accepted as associate members. (MTI, 1918 GMT, 27 Oct 98; FBIS-EEU-98-300)

With the exception of an EU commitment to provide \$203 million to assist in the closure of the Chernobyl nuclear power plant, no concrete proposals came out of the meeting. Kuchma responded by charging the EU with "discrimination" against Ukraine, and suggested that, as Ukraine is trying to increase trade with Western countries, the EU is "pushing Ukraine out of Europe to its backyard." He worried that, because of the EU visa and tariff requirements that will soon be instituted by many of Ukraine's western neighbors, a "modernized iron curtain" will be drawn "in front of Kyiv's nose." (Kiyevskiye vedomosti, 29 Oct 98, p. 1; FBIS-SOV-98-307, and ITAR- TASS, 1544 GMT, 16 Oct 98; FBIS-SOV-98-289)

BELARUS

The bloom is off the rose

An unnamed Belarusian National Bank representative last week acknowledged the inevitable. Even the robust, efficient, self-reliant economy of Belarus cannot go unaffected by the Russian economic crisis. Although President Lukashenka announced that the Belarusian Gross National Product had increased 10 percent so far this year, it is simply not enough.

The National Bank representative admitted that industrial production has decreased 4.5 percent in Belarus since August, inflation has risen to 17.6 percent from 3.8 percent in August and the Belarusian ruble (BR) has dropped from 250,000 to 300,000 to \$1. The BR has now lost almost 100 percent of its value. "The Belarusian miracle has ended," said the representative. (ITAR-TASS, 1507 GMT, 23 Oct 98; FBIS-SOV-98-296, and RFE/RL Newslines, 4 Nov 98)

Tell me something I don't already know

Strikes and protests are spreading throughout Belarus, in spite of the severe limitations placed on its citizens by the government and the police.

A little over two weeks ago, hundreds of people from the Popular Front (BPF) opposition political party, under the watchful eye of police, marched through Minsk carrying the banned red-and-white Belarusian flag and denouncing President Lukashenka's policies. Around the same time, the deputy speaker of the elected parliament that was disbanded by Lukashenka called publicly for presidential elections to be held, and for freer radio and television broadcasts. (RFE/RL Newslines, 27 Oct 98)

Just one week later, on 1 November, more than 3,000 people attended a BPF "remembrance day" for victims of Stalinist purges who are buried in Belarus' Kurapaty forest. The BPF says over 200,000 victims are buried in Kurapaty.

Belarusian officials, however, claim "no more than 7,000 people" are buried there. (BTK Television, 1900 GMT, 5 Nov 98; FBIS-SOV-98-310, and RFE/RL Newslines, 2 Nov 98)

Finally, on 5 November, nearly 3,000 workers rallied at the Minsk Tractor Plant, demanding that the minimum monthly wage (now officially set at \$70) be increased, and that the workers' views be reported on television. After the rally, over 500 of the workers marched to the presidential residence in a futile attempt to see President Lukashenka. (RFE/RL Newslines, 6 Nov 98) It has been reported that at least five protesters were arrested.

MOLDOVA

Cabinet easily survives no-confidence vote...

After two weeks of claiming "the question is not if but when the cabinet will resign," and "today no one doubts that the cabinet is out," members of the Communist Party were unable to sustain a no-confidence vote in the government of Prime Minister Ion Ciubuc. The measure needed 51 votes to pass, but only garnered 38. There are 40 Communists in the parliament. Most surprising, however, was that 43 out of 101 members of parliament did not even show up to the chamber to vote, leading some to wonder if the MPs were supporting the cabinet, or simply blocking the Communists from taking control. (Interfax, 1806 GMT, 4 Nov 98; FBIS-SOV-98-308, Basapress, 1930 GMT, 5 Nov 98; FBIS-SOV-98-309, and RFE/RL Newslines, 12 Nov 98)

...As currency begins free fall

On 2 November, the government stopped "propping up" the leu. In one day, the leu dropped nearly 40 percent, from 6.4 to 10 leu to the US dollar. This comes on top of a 20-percent devaluation in early October. The cost of food has already risen between 15 percent and 70 percent, and energy prices are expected to be increased shortly.

National Bank Chairman Leonid Talmaci said that, as a result of governmental support of the leu, Moldova's hard currency reserves have dropped from \$300 million to \$200 million. (RFE/RL Newsline, 3 Nov 98)

There'll be no Transdnistr II today

On 12 November, the parliament passed an administrative reform bill that dissolved the separate administrations of several counties into larger entities. One county that will be dissolved is Taraclia County, which is inhabited primarily by Bulgars. Leaders of the Bulgar community had threatened unrest if their county was dissolved into the larger Cahul County, thus making them a minority. (Evenimentul Zileu, 17 Oct 98; FBIS-SOV-98-292, and Basapress, 1700 GMT, 20 Oct 98; FBIS-SOV-98-293) The parliament, however, has created a new position, Deputy County Chairman of Cahul County. The deputy chairman will be "in charge of the special needs" of the Bulgars. The move seems to have silenced the Bulgarian opposition. (RFE/RL Newsline, 13 Nov 98)

Newly Independent States: Caucasus

By Miriam Lanskoj

ARMENIA

A common solution?

The three co-chairmen of the OSCE Minsk group -- Yuri Yukalov (Russia), Donald Keyser (US) and Georges Vosgien (France) -- presented their most recent plan for Nagorno-Karabakh's future status to the Armenian government on 10 November. Yukalov refused to discuss the details of the proposal, saying only that Azerbaijan and Armenia asked for some time to review the document and that it speaks of a "common state." He did not specify the attributes of the common state, saying only that a similar formulation had been discussed in the Abkhazia-Georgia and the Transdnistr-Moldova disputes. (Snark, 1400 GMT, 10 Nov 98; FBIS-SOV-98-314)

AZERBAIJAN

Surat Husseinov's courtroom revelations

While testifying in his own defense against treason charges, former Prime Minister Surat Husseinov accused President Aliev of deliberately undermining the government of the previous president, Abulfaz Elchibey, making strategic concessions to Armenia to Azerbaijan's detriment, and promoting a secessionist movement in southern Azerbaijan.

Husseinov, a decorated commander in the war over Nagorno-Karabakh, was instrumental in the 1993 coup which toppled Elchibey and installed Aliev as president and Husseinov as prime minister. That arrangement held until a year later when Husseinov tried to lead what was widely considered to be a Russian-sponsored coup against Aliev. Husseinov's ties to Russia are indeed a matter of great interest since his chief service for the Azerbaijani military consisted of procuring Russian weapons and supplies. After Aliev came to power, Husseinov's suppliers dried up and military defeats followed.

In court last week Husseinov blamed Aliev for the military reverses of 1994, saying that Aliev authorized a cease-fire in the Agdam region to support the Armenian President Lev Ter-Petrosian. Armenians used that cease-fire in Agdam to take the regions Fizuli and Jebrail. He also testified that Aliev had repeatedly sought to form a conspiracy with him against the Elchibey presidency. Moreover, Aliev allegedly sponsored a separatist ethnic movement in the republic. "It was Aliyev himself who proposed talks about the Talysh-Mugan republic. It was a game prepared in Nakhichevan," he said. (Azadlyg, 4 Nov 98; BBC Summary of World Broadcasts, 9 Nov 98/nexis) Elchibey endorsed Husseinov's story, saying that parts of it are true but that he will wait to make a full statement. (Turan, 1600 GMT, 6 Nov 98; FBIS-SOV-98-313)

GEORGIA

Shevardnadze agrees to meet with Ardzinba

In his 2 November radio interview, Georgian President Eduard Shevardnadze indicated that he would meet Abkhaz leader Vladislav Ardzinba in Sukhumi. The move was greeted with some apprehension from Shevardnadze's own security officers, who noted that they could not guarantee his safety in Abkhazia. Other observers were uneasy about the legitimacy imparted to Ardzinba by such a high-level delegation. Yet Shevardnadze explained that this meeting could prove instrumental in producing a document on refugee repatriation.

If such a document materializes, the US stands ready to provide financial allocations for rebuilding homes in the Gali region. Stephen Sestanovich and other US officials who visited Georgia at the end of October indicated that \$15 million would be made available. (Radio Tbilisi Network, 0704 GMT, 2 Nov 98; FBIS-SOV-98-306)

Making the right enemies

An Abkhaz newspaper, Respublika Abkhazia, published a venomous open letter to Senator Brownback (R-Kansas) in connection with a recent Senate speech in which he called Georgia the most important state of the Caucasus and mentioned Russian military assistance to the Abkhaz. In particular the authors were incensed by his comment that "every expert visiting the region agrees" that "it is Russia that is responsible for arming, training, and supporting the so-called Abkhaz freedom fighters with the aim of destabilizing Shevardnadze's government." (Sakinform, 1030 GMT, 7 Nov 98; FBIS-SOV-98-311) Clearly the Abkhaz are not used to seeing American statesmen so well informed and so eager to address these issues.

Newly Independent States: Central Asia

By Monika Shepherd

KAZAKHSTAN

Ex-premier still barred from running as registration for elections begins

Zagipa Balieva, chairperson of Kazakhstan's Central Election Commission, informed journalists on 5 November that, unless former prime minister Aqezhan Qazhegeldyn can obtain a ruling from a higher court overturning his 15 October criminal conviction in an Almaty district court, he will remain ineligible to run in the upcoming presidential elections. (Interfax, 1435 GMT, 5 Nov 98; FBIS-SOV-98-310) Mr. Qazhegeldyn was convicted on charges of participating in the activities of an unregistered political opposition group, the Movement for Fair Elections, and ordered to pay a fine of 6,600 tenge (approximately US \$80). (ITAR-TASS, 1943 GMT, 27 Oct 98; FBIS-SOV-98-300) In order to be eligible to challenge President Nazarbaev in the January 1999 elections, Mr. Qazhegeldyn must submit a higher court decision overturning this conviction by 30 November, which also happens to be the deadline for registering one's candidacy in the elections. Each candidate must collect 170,000 signatures and pay a registration fee of either 2,440,000 tenge (approximately US\$30,000) or 1,000 times the minimum wage in order to obtain a place on the presidential election ballot. (Interfax, 1435 GMT, 5 Nov 98; FBIS-SOV-98-310)

Comment

The candidate pool for the office of president currently includes: the incumbent, President Nursultan Nazarbaev; Engels Gabbasov, a member of Kazakhstan's upper parliamentary chamber; Communist Party leader Serikbolsyn Abdildin; Zhaksybai Bazilbaev, vice president of the Munai research and production center (Interfax, 1435 GMT, 5 Nov 98; FBIS-SOV-98-310); Karishal Asanov, an Almaty pensioner; Asylbek Amantai, leader of the anti-nuclear movement Attan; and Gani Kasymov, chairman of Kazakhstan's Customs Committee. (Interfax, 1655 GMT, 10 Nov 98; FBIS-SOV-98-314) With Petr Svoik and Murat Auezov out of the running (due to criminal convictions on charges of having participated in illegal demonstrations), Mr. Qazhegeldyn is probably the only potential candidate

who has sufficient status and name recognition among Kazakhstan's citizens to present President Nazarbaev with a real challenge in the January elections. Indeed, Kazakhstan's presidential elections may not be taken seriously by some members of the international community or even be recognized as legitimate and fair, unless the Kazakh government permits at least one strong challenger to run against President Nazarbaev.

KYRGYZSTAN

Kyrgyz-Tajik border reinforced

Colonel B. Nogoibaev, the chief of the Internal Affairs Directorate in the Osh Region, informed journalists from Vecherniy Bishkek (a daily Russian-language newspaper) that so far no military troops, but only additional law enforcement units, have been sent to reinforce certain sections of the Kyrgyz-Tajik border. Police subdivisions from the internal affairs ministry have been transferred to the Lyaylyak and Batken regions, which border the Tajik province of Leninobod where a former government commander, Colonel Mahmud Khudoiberdiev, attacked provincial administrative institutions on 4 November. In addition to guarding the border against Colonel Khudoiberdiev's forces, the Kyrgyz internal affairs ministry units also began establishing checkpoints to receive any civilian refugees who might flee across the border into Kyrgyzstan. As of 6 November, however, no incidents of refugees crossing the border had been reported to the Osh office of the UNHCR. (Vecherniy Bishkek, 6 Nov 98, p. 1; FBIS-UMA-98-313)

Chaldovar Russian Orthodox parish first to be suspended, lose its church

The Chaldovar Russian Orthodox parish has become the first to be suspended and lose its church, due to its failure to register with the Kyrgyz State Commission on Religious Affairs. The parish was established more than four years ago at the Church of the Blessed Virgin in the village of Chaldovar (just west of Bishkek). In Fall 1997, President Askar Akaev issued a decree requiring all foreign churches and foreign religious organizations to register with the State

Commission on Religious Affairs, which was formed in February 1997. The Church of the Blessed Virgin had already been granted a certificate of registration in 1993. The church's pastor, Vladimir Klipenshtein, appealed the new decree nine times, pleading his church's case to the national security ministry, the prosecutor-general's office, human rights activists and parliamentary deputies. This October the activities of Mr. Klipenshtein's church were suspended, pending the submission of new registration documents to the commission. (Vecherniy Bishkek, 23 Oct 98, p. 4; FBIS-SOV-98-310) Panfilov District state administration and law enforcement officials then sealed the church building. Both Mr. Klipenshtein and the coordinator of the Kyrgyz-American Human Rights Bureau, Zulfia Marat, consider this action to constitute an illegal appropriation of the Church of the Blessed Virgin's property by the Kyrgyz state. (Vecherniy Bishkek, 2 Nov 98, p. 2; FBIS-SOV-98-310)

Foreign minister offered to resign over Iranian arms affair

According to unofficial sources, Kyrgyzstan's foreign minister, Muratbek Imanaliev, submitted his resignation to President Akaev in early November, reportedly because of his role in the affair of the Iranian arms cargo which was impounded by Kyrgyz customs officials in Osh last October. The foreign minister submitted his resignation directly to the president in a private meeting, during which President Akaev apparently requested that Mr. Imanaliev continue working while his request was being considered. (Kyrgyzkabar, 1100 GMT, 4 Nov 98; FBIS-SOV-98-308)

TAJIKISTAN

Khudoiberdiev's latest power play foiled by UTO-government alliance

In the early morning of 4 November, Colonel Mahmud Khudoiberdiev staged yet another attempt to gain a share in Tajikistan's ruling structures by invading Khojand (the provincial capital of Leninobod Oblast') and the neighboring town of Chkalovsk. (NTV, 0600 GMT, 4 Nov 98; FBIS-SOV-98-308) He was accompanied by at least 1,000-2,000 troops, who are believed to have entered

Leninobod from Uzbekistan, possibly from the vicinity of Dzhizak (a town located 40-50 km east of the Tajik border). Col. Khudoiberdiev and his men took over the headquarters of the internal affairs directorate and the regional security directorate in Khojand, as well as the airport in Chkalovsk, where the colonel established his own command post. Khudoiberdiev's forces also managed to take control of the village of Aini (located approximately 100 km southwest of Khojand, 130 km north of Dushanbe, and less than 50 km south of the Uzbek border), thereby cutting off the only highway linking Khojand with Dushanbe, near the Anzob mountain pass. The Tajik government responded by airlifting 200 Presidential Guard units and 80 paratroopers from the defense ministry to Khojand on the afternoon of 4 November. (Interfax, 0923 GMT, 5 Nov 98; FBIS-SOV-98-309)

Government forces were able to surround Col. Khudoiberdiev's headquarters at the Chkalovsk airport, but they were not able to keep him from giving numerous telephone interviews to various international news agencies, including Moscow NTV. The colonel used these interviews to issue the following demands and conditions for a cease-fire: an amnesty for all prisoners and those currently living in exile who participated in political resistance activities from 1991 onward; a 40-percent share in the government for himself and his supporters in Khojand; establishment of a new state council for Tajikistan; and a special session of parliament in Khojand in order to resolve all other conflicts. Col. Khudoiberdiev also explained that he and his forces had entered Khojand in order to put an end to a dispute between two rival drug lords which was endangering the city; he did not invade, but came to reestablish law and order. (NTV, 1900 GMT, 4 Nov 98; FBIS-UMA-98-308) In a later written statement, Col. Khudoiberdiev demanded that his conditions for holding negotiations with the government and establishing a cease-fire be broadcast on Tajik national television. In this statement he also referred to himself as the leader of the "movement for universal peace in Tajikistan," whose purpose is to bring about peace in the country with the participation of all regional political factions. By way of further explanation for his

actions, Col. Khudoiberdiev stated: "We decided to appear in the political arena, in order to force the Rakhmanov government to heed the voice of the nation and to stop political terror against its opponents." (ITAR-TASS, 1221 GMT, 5 Nov 98; FBIS-SOV-98-309)

Despite many statements from the Tajik government touting the success of its ongoing operations against Col. Khudoiberdiev's troops, it was not until 1,000 United Tajik Opposition (UTO) units, under the command of Mirzo Ziyoyev, joined government troops already stationed in Khojand that the colonel's forces were fully routed. Col. Khudoiberdiev himself was not captured; it was suspected that he might have left Tajikistan as early as 7 November. (NTV, 0900 GMT, 7 Nov 98; FBIS-SOV-98-311) The Tajik government also regained control of Aini on 8 November, although not before Col. Khudoiberdiev's men were able to destroy a railway bridge linking Khojand and Dushanbe. (ITAR-TASS World Service, 0246 GMT, 6 Nov 98; FBIS-SOV-98-310)

Comment

By now it has become quite clear that Col. Khudoiberdiev launched his invasion of Leninobod from Uzbekistan, and President Rakhmonov's administration has taken the unusual step of directly accusing the Uzbek government of aiding and sheltering not only Mahmud Khudoiberdiev, but also such figures as Yoqub Salimov, former chairman of Tajikistan's Customs Committee (in August 1997 his forces engaged in a brief battle with those of Col. Suhrob Qosimov in Dushanbe; Salimov was subsequently driven out of the country); Ergash Hasanov, Col. Khudoiberdiev's elder brother; Abdumalik Abdullojonov, the former prime minister of Tajikistan and founder of the National Revival Bloc opposition party in Leninobod; Abdughani Abdullojonov, the former mayor of Khujand and Abdumalik Abdullojonov's younger brother; and a long list of others, primarily from either Leninobod or Khatlon (Col. Khudoiberdiev's former stronghold). The Russian Federation has also been accused of providing refuge to Abdumalik Abdullojonov (Radio Tajikistan First Channel Network, 1400 GMT, 9 Nov 98;

FBIS-SOV-98-314); perhaps this is why President Rakhmanov did not call upon the Russian military to come to his aid against Col. Khudoiberdiev, but was willing to accept the assistance of the UTO instead. The Tajik government has also alleged that troops under General Abdurrashid Dostum (a member of the Afghan anti-Taliban alliance who enjoys a cordial relationship with Uzbekistan's President Karimov) helped to train Khudoiberdiev's forces and fought alongside them in their latest attacks. (Radio Tajikistan First Channel Network, 1100 GMT, 7 Nov 98, FBIS-SOV-98-312)

This incident has undoubtedly soured official relations between the Uzbek and Tajik governments, and may have even improved President Rakhmonov's ties with the UTO leadership, but it is far too early to make any predictions as to whether this will have any significant impact on the progress of the peace agreement. The Uzbek government still wields a great deal of influence over events in Tajikistan because of the large Uzbek minority population residing in Leninobod. Abdumalik Abdullojonov's National Revival Bloc appears to be the dominant political force in Leninobod, and it has been in opposition to President Rakhmonov's administration since its establishment. The National Revival Bloc's main issue, with which Col. Khudoiberdiev seems to have made common cause, is to be granted a role in the inter-Tajik peace agreement and, subsequently, a voice in the government. President Rakhmanov has not only consistently denied Abdullojonov's party such a role, but has begun staffing the Leninobod provincial administration with his own political supporters from Kulob. Until the issue of Leninobod's representation in the government has been resolved to both sides' satisfaction, it is unlikely that the region will cease to be a source of instability and conflict. This provides the Uzbek and Russian governments with ample opportunity to intervene in Tajikistan's internal affairs. Despite the fact that the Russian Federation and Uzbekistan are among the so-called "guarantors" of the inter-Tajik peace treaty, both countries have thus far exhibited hostile attitudes toward the concept of a Tajik government which grants a significant share of power to the Islamic Renaissance Party (IRP), the dominant force in the UTO.

Newly Independent States: Baltic States

By Kate Martin

Ilves: No more 'all for one'

Estonia's former foreign minister, Toomas Hendrik Ilves, spoke out against the Western tendency to lump together Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania, and referred to the connotation of "the Baltic states" as a "concept forced upon us by German colonizers." Such thinking, coupled with unpopular actions by Lithuania and Latvia, has been detrimental to Estonia's quest for inclusion in Western organizations, he believes. Ilves put Estonia into the Nordic countries category, and termed Lithuania -- in line with the thinking of most Lithuanian politicians -- as a Central European nation. "The only question is what to do with Latvia," he told the audience at a high-level business forum. (Baltic News Service, 0241 GMT, 10 Nov 98; FBIS-SOV-98-314)

The European Union is one Western entity that can, clearly, differentiate between the three countries. Already having placed Estonia in the first round of countries to begin talks for membership, the European Commission recently rebuffed demands by Sweden and Denmark to add Lithuania and Latvia to the "fast-track" list. (Baltic News Service, 1040 GMT, 4 Nov 98; FBIS-SOV-98-308) However, the EC's Commissioner for Foreign Affairs, Hans van den Broek, did hold out some hope for Latvia. In a speech to the European Parliament, Van den Broek said the progress report received on Latvia was positive and the commission will recommend starting membership talks with Riga at the end of next year. (Radio Riga Network, 1730 GMT, 4 Nov 98; FBIS-SOV-98-309)

LATVIA

People's Party retains people's support, but not parliament's

While former transportation minister Vilis Kristopans gathered enough parliamentary support to be nominated as Latvia's new prime minister, he does not, apparently, hold the hearts of the populace. Kristopans, the candidate favored by the coalition of Latvia's Way, Fatherland and Freedom/LNNK and the New Party, held the guaranteed support of 46 members of parliament, a critical factor in President Ulmanis' decision to name him to the post. (Radio Riga Network, 1600 GMT, 3 Nov 98; FBIS-SOV-98-307) However, a telephone poll run by Latvian Radio a few days earlier asking citizens who they would prefer as prime minister resulted in an embarrassingly low number of calls for the leading candidate. After four days of voting, Kristopans managed to acquire only four votes. Meanwhile, the leader of the People's Party (and former prime minister), Andris Skele, received 212 votes, followed closely by the man who held the post at the time of the polling, Guntars Krasts, with 192. (Baltic News Service Daily Report, 1100 GMT, 30 Oct 98) Skele's People's Party received the most votes in the 3 October election, and holds 24 seats in parliament. (Baltic News Service, 1800 GMT, 23 Oct 98)

On its first day of business, the seventh Saeima elected the entire Saeima presidium. Janis Straume (For the Fatherland and Freedom/LNNK) was elected chairman. His deputies are Indulis Berzins (Latvia's Way) and Gundars Bojars (Latvian Social Democratic Union). Silvija Dreimane (New Party) was selected as secretary of the Saeima. Once again, the People's Party was left by the wayside, gaining no positions on the presidium. (Radio Riga Network, 1600 GMT, 3 Nov 98; FBIS-SOV-98-307)

LITHUANIA

Country faces court of world opinion

Lithuania is due to take another beating in the court of world opinion if the present tendency not to complete trials of war criminals continues. While the trial in Vilnius of Aleksandras Lileikis once again was postponed, due to questions of

health, Lithuania is facing the return of another native son who the US at least considers to be a war criminal.

The US Department of Justice has begun deportation proceedings against Kazys Ciurinkas. According to the justice department's Office of Special Investigations, the 80-year-old Ciurinkas of Indiana was a member of the Second Lithuanian Schutzmannschaft, which shot thousands of Jews in Belarus, and even earned a promotion for "conscientiously fulfilling his duties" while serving in the battalion in 1941. On his citizenship application to the US, Ciurinkas indicated that he had worked as a miller from 1936 to 1944. However, his successful application to the German government for a soldier's pension (which he received until last year) provided evidence to the contrary. Still, the Lithuanian Prosecutor General's special investigation department has reported that it holds no evidence against Ciurinkas. (Baltic News Service Daily Report, 1700 GMT, 30 Oct 98)

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