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## **Russian Federation: Political Parties**

By Luba Schwartzman

### **POLITICAL PARTIES**

#### **Fewer... or more?**

A plethora of party gatherings, current and planned, finds its common denominator in slogans that are strikingly repetitious, while avoiding the revelation of policy aims... if any.

At an end-of-November congress, the Unity party and the Fatherland-All Russia movement will join forces and form a single centrist party. Currently called the Unity-Fatherland Union, the new party's name will be established at the congress. According to the secretary of the Fatherland Movement's Political Council and secretary of the Unity-Fatherland's General Council, Alexander Vladislavlev, the main tasks of the new political entity will be "to carry on a constructive dialogue with the authorities and to share responsibility with them for everything happening in the country" as well as to "uphold the interests of the country and the people." Vyacheslav Volodin, the leader of the Duma's Fatherland - All Russia faction, noted that together the two parties "will be able to do more by united efforts than separately." He added that the new united centrist party would be represented broadly in the next parliament. (ITAR-TASS, 1245 GMT, 3 Oct 01; FBIS-SOV-2001-1003, via World News Connection)

According to other sources, a third, so far undisclosed, political movement will join the ranks of the new pro-government party, pushing the forces of the right, such as Boris Nemtsov's Union of Right Forces, out of the political mainstream. (ORT, 3 Oct 01; via [www.ortv.ru](http://www.ortv.ru))

Another political transformation already has taken place. On 29 September, at its second congress (attended by about 600 deputies), the People's Deputy movement became the People's Party of Russia (NPRF). Gennady Raikov was elected as the party's leader, and a central committee and a presidium were established. State Duma Deputy Anatoly Aksakov explained that "the party's ideology will be based on general human values, while an end to poverty and establishment of law and order in Russia will be its key goals and tasks." He expects that the People's Party will "gain a great number of votes at the next general elections, since [it] is a party of deputies from single-member constituencies, whose prestige is strong in regions." (ITAR-TASS, 1753 GMT, 25 Sep 01; FBIS-SOV-2001-0925, via World News Connection)

Around the same time, the People's Patriotic Union of Russia (NPSR), which consists of the Communist Party of the Russian Federation (CPRF) and the Agrarian Party of Russia, organized a congress to outline its plan of action for 2002. In opening the congress, CPRF leader Gennady Zyuganov urged all who "consider themselves patriots" to unite forces in order "jointly to find a way to a new level of resolving the problems" facing the country. The principles recommended for Russia's policy were then stated by the chairman of the executive committee of the NPSR, Gennady Semigin. They included "responsibility for the fate of the state, the protection of people's interests and the rights and freedoms of citizens, social justice and sensible state regulation of the economy." These could be further explored in the 68 bills that the NPSR had prepared "on all the key issues relating to the life of the state and society." The chairman of the State Duma, Gennady Seleznev, in his turn, said that building intelligent relations between the state, the labor collectives and the trade unions, as well as active participation by the state in the management of the economy, would require "a complicated range of legal acts." (ITAR-TASS, 1111 GMT, 29 Sep 01; FBIS-SOV-2001-0929, via World News Connection)

## **FEDERAL ASSEMBLY**

### **Making trouble...**

Meanwhile, the Liberal Democratic Party of Russia (LDPR) also has been visible. On 28 September, about 70 activists held a previously sanctioned rally outside the US embassy in Moscow to protest American military action "against the Islamic world." At the rally, LDPR leader Vladimir Zhirinovskiy warned against having Russia "pulled into a scenario thrust on it by certain political forces from outside or involved in retaliatory actions." He claimed that the "Americans are acting slyly, and they have not taken part in anything so far, while Russia could be pulled into a bloody war in Central Asia." In such a case, Zhirinovskiy stated, Russia would "lose its authority," as it already has "by supporting forces in Afghanistan that nobody cares for." (INTERFAX, 1247 GMT, 28 Sep 01; FBIS-SOV-2001-0928, via World News Connection)

The protest was held shortly after the defeat (by a vote of 2 to 79) of a draft resolution advising President Vladimir Putin "to initiate at the UN Security Council the lifting of sanctions imposed against several countries," to request the electronic media "to refrain from the frequent demonstration of violence and terrorism" and to declare that retaliatory strikes on Afghanistan are inadmissible. (INTERFAX, 1407 GMT, 26 Sep 01; FBIS-SOV-2001-0926, via World News Connection) The draft was submitted by LDPR deputy Alexei Mitrofanov, who made such a scene after the vote that Seleznev barred him from speaking in the Duma for a month. (ITAR-TASS, 1544 GMT, 26 Sep 01; FBIS-SOV-2001-0926, via World News Connection)

## **REGIONS**

### **Making copies...**

In the Rostov region, Governor Vladimir Chub was re-elected in a landslide, collecting more than 76 percent of the vote, while the runner-up, deputy head of the Zimovnikovskiy District administration, Petr Voloshin, received only 7 percent.

(ITAR-TASS, 2258 GMT, 23 Sep 01; FBIS-SOV-2001-0924, via World News Connection) On the eve of the election, however, a "provocation" took place in the mining city of Novoshakhtinsk. Leaflets were posted widely, urging the population to vote against Chub. These colored photocopies allegedly were signed by the Novoshakhtinsk mayor, but the business manager of the Novoshakhtinsk administration, Viktor Shevelev, refuted official involvement in the publication of "such literature."

The matter was handed over to the local prosecutor's office, which has begun a criminal investigation. (INTERFAX, 0947 GMT, 23 Sep 01; FBIS-SOV-2001-0923, via World News Connection)

## **MEDIA**

According to the newspaper Rossiiskaya gazeta, other "dirty tricks" and "black PR" have become a problem in election campaigns. Especially nasty content appears in the "black newspapers" that generally appear two to three months before the official start of an election race. The publications are placed in mailboxes, have patriotic-sounding titles and resemble the propaganda of the "pre-revolutionary underground." Similar articles appear throughout the regions, and their authors often are "the same traveling Moscow journalists." The publications generally fall into three categories: those that "besmirch the honor and dignity" of candidates and current governors; those glorifying the "honest and uncompromising" who enjoy "the unconditional support of President Putin," and those that purport to be "letters and replies from readers."

These pamphlets, according to Rossiiskaya gazeta, disappear immediately after the elections and, while not necessarily effective, they are very difficult to combat. (ROSSIISKAYA GAZETA, 2 Oct 01; FBIS-SOV-2001-1002, via World News Connection)

# Russian Federation: Foreign Relations

By Scott Bethel

## **Rags to riches?**

Three weeks ago Russian foreign policy was in a defensive crouch. President Vladimir Putin and Foreign Minister Sergei Ivanov were making every effort to respond on two main fronts. First, at every available opportunity Putin and Ivanov put every sort of pressure possible on the US National Missile Defense (NMD) program. They blamed it for being a destabilizing influence on everything from peace in the Middle East (ITAR-TASS, 1422 GMT, 1 Sep 01; via ISI Emerging Markets) to the Olympic Games (PRAVDA, 7 Sep 01). Second, the foreign policy of Russia was focused on limiting NATO expansion. The Baltic states were poised to join NATO sometime in early 2002 with Bulgaria and Romania poised to make a strong bid by 2004. At the same time Russia was trying to maintain some level of leadership over the particularly foreign policy among the CIS and non-CIS former Soviet states and struggling with the drain of the war in Chechnya -- all this in the context of a weak economy, weak military, and increasingly taking retrograde steps in terms of openness, freedom of the press, and individual rights. And then the terrorist attacks happened in the US on 11 September and everything changed.

Now, Putin and Ivanov are the toast of the international community. They are consulted by the US president and secretary of state. The Russian leaders have been to Washington and Putin just returned from, by all accounts, an extremely successful trip to Germany where he not only met with national and business leaders, but he even addressed the German Bundestag in what was described as perfect German. (THE NEW YORK TIMES, 26 Sep 01) The results of this newfound importance have been profound. The US, through Secretary of State Colin Powell, has endorsed the Russian war in Chechnya as a fight against terrorism (see THE NIS OBSERVED, 26 Sep 01), thereby giving Russia free rein in the region. The new US sentiment on this score has been echoed by the

German, French, and NATO leadership. (NATO HOMEPAGE, 4 Oct 01) The European Union also has softened its stance toward Russia with regard to the Chechen war. Even more striking is the fact that France, the most constant and harshest critic of Russian excesses in Chechnya, has agreed to tone down its comments toward this issue. (LE MONDE, 27 Sep 01; via lemonde.fr) In addition, when considering basing in any post-Soviet country, both Powell and Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld confirmed that Russia would be consulted as negotiations proceeded. (See THE NIS OBSERVED, 26 Sep 01) Putin delivered the final tour de force during his visit to NATO on 3 October when he alluded to the idea that Russia might even consider itself as a candidate member to NATO. (NATO HOMEPAGE, 4 Oct 01) Finally, Moscow has gone to the forefront of attempting Middle East and even Israeli-Palestinian mediation and has tried to become a regional power broker among Arab states.

Why the sudden shift? The reasons are twofold. First, Putin has shown himself very skilled at taking advantage of any situation. He was able to salvage a public relations nightmare in the sinking of the Kursk and to retain public confidence. In a recent poll Russian children even say Putin is "cool." (ITAR-TASS, 08 Sep 01; via ISI Emerging Markets) He has been successful also at working with Western politicians. This is mainly due to his KGB background and training along with his longtime posting in Germany. Second, the West needs Russia right now, or at least the West believes it needs Russia. This is true of both Western perception of Russian regional influence (even hegemony) over the post-Soviet space and of the Russian sponsorship of the Northern Alliance opposition forces in Afghanistan. Finally it is important to note that with the focus of world attention on the Middle East, the Russians have one of the most experienced hands in the region, Yevgeny Primakov. He is believed to have extensive contact networks in the area (including a close personal relationship with Saddam Hussein) and the ability to exploit them successfully. (BBC WORLD SERVICE, 17 Aug 00; via ISI Emerging Markets) In the end, Russia is making the most of extraordinary opportunity and will continue to feature prominently as this crisis develops.

### **Arms deal with Iran**

In another change, abandoning the Gore-Chernomyrdin agreement, Moscow has inked a major arms deal with Teheran for an estimated \$7 billion. (INTERFAX, 0937 GMT, 4 Oct 01; via ISI Emerging Markets) Included in the deal are some of Russia's best gear, such as Su-27 and Su-30 fighter jets, Ka-50 and Ka-52 helicopters, and T-90 and T-82U tanks. This is particularly significant for both countries. For the Russians it holds much promise. First, Iran will pay cash, a commodity in short supply in Moscow. Second, it opens additional opportunities for expanded markets throughout the region. A successful delivery to Iran certainly will impress its neighbors and perhaps entice them also to seek a deal. For the Iranians it is equally important. Such a deal further cracks Western pressure on its economy via sanctions. (IRNA, 1808 GMT, 4 Oct 01; via ISI Emerging Markets) Since it is not able to get access to the best Western military technology, the Russian equipment will provide Iran with its first major upgrade since the revolution of 1979. Iran also will become a much more powerful nation able to threaten the Straits of Hormuz with advanced fighters, missiles, and vastly improved radar.

## **Russian Federation: Armed Forces**

By Walter Jackson

### **Not in my backyard**

As US coalition building continues, Russian President Vladimir Putin has struggled to maintain Russian politico-military dominance in Central Asia and, at the same time, keep the Russian economy pumped up. Russia continues its attempt to dictate the direction of regional support to the anti-terrorist efforts. Russian Chief of the General Staff Anatoly Kvashnin said in a press conference in Yerevan on 3 October that he didn't believe that there was any reason for the US to use military airfields on Uzbek and Tajik territory for launching air strikes

into Afghanistan. He also stated that the US had asked for the use of bases and air corridors for logistical support only. Keeping a low profile, he reiterated that Russian military hardware and personnel were not being used in the retaliatory action in Afghanistan. Russia was only engaged in the exchange of information concerning the presence of terrorist organizations and different facilities in Afghanistan, Kvashnin said. (INTERFAX, 1646 GMT, 3 Oct 01; FBIS-SOV-2001-1003, via World News Connection) Although Russia purportedly speaks for CIS members, behind the scenes the US and UK apparently continue to insert special operating forces and reconnaissance infrastructure around and within Afghanistan.

### **Money talks**

Ironically, as much of the international community struggles to put the lid on terrorism, Russia signed an agreement on military and technological sales to a state known to sponsor terrorism -- Iran. Meanwhile, the State Duma defense committee chairman, Army General Andrei Nikolaev, said that Russia will not be involved directly in possible US combat actions in Afghanistan but is ready to provide support to the Northern Alliance. (ITAR-TASS, 1820 GMT, 3 Oct 01; FBIS-SOV-2001-1003, via World News Connection) Russia and Iran both support the Afghani Northern Alliance. Russia goes a little further by allowing corridors through its airspace for NATO and US humanitarian aid to the starving Afghani population.

During his recent visit to Moscow, Iranian President Mohammad Khatami met with President Putin; together they reached an agreement on defense cooperation (including weapons sales, expansion of nuclear power plant construction, and other technology transfers) that could net billions in revenue to the Russian defense industry. Russian Defense Minister Sergei Ivanov and his Iranian counterpart, Rear Admiral Ali Shamkhani, signed the agreement on 2 October. Russia has long ignored US demands to stop selling weapons and military (especially nuclear) technology to Iran. To date Tehran has maintained

an unwavering policy opposing US military engagements in Afghanistan. Besides the basics of supply and demand, the foreign policy goals of Russia and Iran, at the moment, do not seem to coincide, especially in terms of perceived threats. Given its support of the Northern Alliance, clearly Russia sees the Taliban as a terrorist group; however, Moscow has worked strenuously to convince the international community that Chechen rebels also fall into the terrorist category. According to Shamkhani, Iran's view is radically different. "Iran has suffered greatly from international terrorism, and... the 'university of international terrorism' is Israel" he claimed. (IRNA, 1618 GMT, 2 Oct 01; FBIS-NES-2001-1002, via World News Connection).

Russia's definition of terrorists appears, on the surface at least, to differ less from Western definitions (with the exception of the inclusion of Chechen rebels -- until Colin Powell's recent acquiescence, at least). However, economics clearly trumps any other considerations for Moscow. By transferring nuclear technology (that is, helping build a nuclear power plant) at the military complex in Bushehr, and agreeing to sell modern fighter aircraft and long-range air-defense systems, Russia is promoting the development of a well-armed modern nuclear power that sees Israel as the central enemy in the region. President George W. Bush's assertion that the US will seek out all states that support terrorism earned an interesting response from a Russian official this week. "A Western attack on Iraq, in revenge for the 11 September terrorist attacks, would result in a sharply negative reaction from Moscow," according to Aleksandr Shein, Russian Ambassador to Iraq. (INTERFAX, 2 Oct 01; via Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty Newslines)

### **Russian-Ukrainian Black Sea Fleet exercise**

Russian and Ukrainian naval forces completed a joint peace-keeping exercise, Peace Keep 2001, in the Black Sea on 28 September. This exercise included 24 warships and 31 support vessels conducting missile, torpedo and depth-charge firings, 700 marines conducting an amphibious assault landing, and a missile

launch from the Caspian shore.(ITAR-TASS, 1208 GMT, 28 Sep 01; FBIS-SOV-2001-0928, via World News Connection) The successful completion of this exercise clearly bolstered -- at least the Ukrainian portion -- of Russia's recent efforts to solidify the CIS organization.

### **Russian submarine launch delayed**

The launch of the latest Russian nuclear-powered submarine had been delayed pending the successful recovery of (a portion of) the Russian submarine Kursk. Recovery operations were hampered by weather and other technical difficulties in the Barents Sea, as winter weather approached. Reportedly ready for service, the latest Russian submarine likely will be launched this week. The Gepard series 12,700-ton nuclear submarine can travel at a maximum speed of 33 knots at a depth of 600 meters with a crew of 63 men. (ITAR-TASS, 1143 GMT, 1 Oct 01; FBIS-SOV-2001-1001, via World News Connection) In the aftermath of the terrible loss of the Kursk and her crew last year, and the poor handling of the attempted rescue, the Russian submarine force needs this shot in the arm. In an apparent attempt to deflect criticism, several other Russian theories continue to circulate as to the cause of the Kursk sinking -- the leading one remains that a collision with a foreign (US or UK) submarine actually caused the accident. The most likely scenario, however, remains an explosion in the forward section of the Kursk, the theory that both the US and UK support. It is indeed unfortunate that President Putin hasn't figured out yet that sometimes it is just best to accept responsibility for the accident, and to take action to ensure it doesn't happen again -- that would probably go much further in satisfying the families of the Kursk's crew.

## **Newly Independent States: Western Region**

By Tammy Lynch

### **UKRAINE**

## **Yes... no... well, maybe...**

Ukraine may not be participating in operations against Afghanistan; nonetheless, the country is dealing with a number of questions about its military capabilities. The questions started just days before the beginning of the US-led air strikes in Afghanistan when, during military exercises, Ukraine inadvertently may have shot down a Russian TU-154 passenger plane flying over the Black Sea on its way from Tel Aviv to Novosibirsk. The crash killed 78 persons. Although Ukrainian officials now deny their missile hit the plane, the pattern of events corresponds closely to another wayward missile incident just 18 months ago. That first incident resulted in four deaths when a Tochka-U surface-to-surface missile smashed into an apartment building near Kyiv in April 2000.

Immediately following the explosion in the apartment complex, a "high-ranking source" within the interior ministry said "it was a missile," which was fired from 30 kilometers away during test-firing exercises, that caused the disaster. (ITAR-TASS, 1928 GMT, 21 Apr 00; FBIS-SOV-2000-0421, via World News Connection) Just hours later, however, the defense ministry refuted that suggestion, saying that a bomb may have caused the explosion. "All missiles launched during the exercise," a ministry spokesman said, "hit the set tasks at the training ground." (KOMMERSANT DAILY, 3 May 00; Defense and Security, via lexis-nexis)

Similarly, immediately following the crash of the Russian airliner into the Black Sea on the morning of 4 October 2001, a Ukrainian navy official told reporters that the plane indeed had been shot down by Ukraine. "I can hardly believe it," Igor Larichev said, "but a Ukrainian missile shot down the plane." He continued, "The firing of missiles with a range of 400 kilometers took place in the course of an anti-air attack exercise in the Feodosia in Crimea." Those exercises, he said, resulted in the errant missile. (AGENCE FRANCE PRESSE, 4 Oct 01; via lexis-nexis) But after Larichev's statement, the defense ministry quickly disavowed his

assertion. Russian Navy Spokesman Igor Dygalo (incidentally, the same spokesman who denied the missile theory in 2000) told reporters that Larichev never actually said what he said and must have been misquoted. (INTERFAX, 1721 GMT, 4 Oct 01; FBIS-SOV-2001-1004, via World News Connection) Further, the ministry announced in a statement that "all missiles hit the targets in the designated area." Sound familiar? (ITAR-TASS, 2120 GMT, 4 Oct 01; FBIS-SOV-2001-1004, via World News Connection)

In both cases, evidence quickly became available suggesting that missiles actually were responsible for the catastrophes. A missile launch just moments before the Russian plane exploded and crashed a week ago, for example, was reportedly picked up by at least one US intelligence satellite. Citing this satellite evidence, an unnamed US official told Agence France Presse, "At the moment we believe it was shot down by the Ukrainian" authorities. (AGENCE FRANCE PRESSE, 5 Oct 01; via lexis-nexis) Additionally, according to the head of Russia's Security Council, rescue vessels have collected debris that seems to contradict Ukrainian denials. Vladimir Rushailo said, "There are objects which have been found which were not related to a plane." (REUTERS, 0645 EST, 6 Oct 01; via Yahoo! News)

Still, Ukrainian officials cling to their denials, although their stance seems to have softened slightly over the last several days. To bolster their case, on 8 October military officials showed a video to reporters; the video, they said, would show that their missiles could not have reached the plane. Most reporters who attended the press conference seemed unconvinced. But perhaps they're simply jaded. This recent demonstration was similar to one conducted in April 2000 after the first missile incident. According to Kommersant-Daily, at that time, officials "demonstrated to the press a mortar charge allegedly found at the site of the incident" to suggest that the explosion was caused by illegal ammunition housed in the building. (KOMMERSANT DAILY, 3 May 00; Defense and Security, via lexis-nexis)

Because of the nature of the first incident, however, the government's attempts to deny responsibility were dismissed relatively quickly, and the military was forced to concede its mistake. Unlike the unrecoverable plane wreckage at the bottom of the Black Sea, the evidence from the apartment building was readily available not only to officials, but also to reporters. On 24 April, therefore, the military admitted that a missile had caused the explosion. So, why the delay in announcing this? "It was difficult," Ministry of Defense Spokesman Sergei Nagorzansky said, "to establish whether or not our rocket was responsible, because the destruction to the building was so great." (DEUTSCHE PRESSE-AGENTUR, 0845 CET, 24 Apr 00; via lexis-nexis) Of course, Nagorzansky did not discuss the statements issued days before by the interior ministry -- and quickly denied by defense officials -- acknowledging that a missile was involved. Perhaps he felt it was better for the world to believe that Ukraine simply lost a rocket for over three days.

But by comparison, three days was no time at all. It has now been almost a week since the Russian plane went down. And Russia appears to be getting slightly annoyed. Directly following the crash, Russian President Vladimir Putin rushed to defend his friend, Ukrainian President Leonid Kuchma, who had expressed his confidence that a Ukrainian missile did not hit the plane. (See UKRAINIAN NEWS, 7 Oct 01; via ISI Emerging Markets) Echoing Kuchma, Putin said, "The weapons that were being used during this exercise could not reach the area where our TU-154 was flying." He added, "What I told you as of this moment is based on what our Ukrainian partners have told us and we don't have any reason not to trust them." (ASSOCIATED PRESS, 2003 EST, 4 Oct 01; via Yahoo! News) But gradually, Putin has shifted his stance. Now, he is requesting additional data on the exercises. The question now becomes -- is this information really necessary?

It is, in fact, likely, given the close cooperation of the two militaries, that Russian military officials already are in possession of most of the information about the exercise. More importantly, Russian observers were on hand for the exercise, and quickly supported Ukrainian statements that a missile could not have hit the plane. Instead they hinted, perhaps it was terrorism. Putin himself suggested such a possibility, despite the absence of any evidence to support the idea. "It is possible," he said, "that it is the result of a terrorist act." (IBID.) But, while a terrorist attack would have spared Russian-Ukrainian relations and created a better tactical position for Putin in his quest to control certain insurgent groups, the idea was quickly dismissed thanks to US satellite information. Therefore, Ukraine is left -- as in 2000 -- to decide between admitting incompetence or admitting deception.

Perhaps in a few days, the Ukrainian military will discover that it can't account for one missile after all. Until then, the families of 78 people will be left to wonder how they lost their loved ones and why no one will explain it to them.

## Newly Independent States: Caucasus

By Miriam Lansky

### **Preliminary talks held**

Gen. Viktor Kazantsev, the presidential representative to the Southern district, has held a number of conversations with Akhmed Zakaev, who has been designated by President Aslan Maskhadov to open discussions. This follows on President Putin's 24 September statement calling on the Chechen resistance to surrender their weapons and to contact Kazantsev to begin talks. Although only a few weapons were collected, preliminary talks to define the time and location of a future meeting have been held. However, fighting continued as Chechen units temporarily occupied several towns on 29-30 September. After the Chechen

units withdrew, the Russian armed forces subjected the inhabitants to another round of "cleansing."

Roman Khalilov, head of Political Affairs in the Chechen foreign ministry, on 4 October commented on these events to the NIS Observed. He said that the start of a political dialogue has had no impact on the situation on the ground. "The talks so far concern modalities for a meeting between Kazantsev and President Maskhadov's representative, Akhmed Zakaev. The military operations undertaken last week were planned in advance of President Putin's statements. The fighting and the cleansings that followed them are in fact routine. The situation did not get worse. And in principle, it does not seem that it can get worse. After the brutalities in Alleroi or Assinovskaya it is not possible to speak of deteriorating conditions."

As for the direction the talks could take, Mr. Khalilov said, "No Chechen politician will abandon the goal of independence. Maskhadov will not do this, nor will anyone else. Even if there was a leader willing to do so, he simply would not be able to because this would mean ceasing to be a leader. It is too late: Too much wrong has been done to the Chechens. At the same time, obtaining independence is a process. And the key in the short term is to stabilize Chechnya. We can not afford to return to the situation of 1996 when we were blockaded and isolated -- in the initial phases the main goal is to end Chechnya's isolation. There has to be access to international institutions and foreign states so that the process of restoration of the republic can begin."

### **Moscow wants to pull out of Chechnya?**

For the first time in two years of war talks are being held on the president's explicit instructions. Two sessions of talks between Russian Duma deputies and Chechen representatives have been acknowledged publicly, more, probably, were held in secret. Although those efforts reflect a widespread public weariness with the war, they garnered only wrath from the executive. Why is Putin, who only

weeks ago lambasted Duma Deputy Boris Nemtsov for daring to suggest a negotiated peace, suddenly looking for a way out of Chechnya?

Pavel Felgenhauer, a highly respected defense analyst, has suggested that Moscow would prefer to lessen Russia's military presence in Chechnya so that more Russian troops and weapons could be sent to Afghanistan: "The roots of the Chechen resistance are located in Chechnya, weapons and military supplies are purchased in Russia on the black market, from the manufacturers, military units or in Chechnya in the zone of military activity. Financial means are 'earned' partially from the illegal oil business in Chechnya, and is partially collected from the Chechen diaspora in Russia, Turkey, and the Middle East." (MOSKOVSKIYE NOVOSTI, 2 Oct 01)

After noting that Maskhadov will seek a Russian military withdrawal from Chechnya, Felgenhauer says, "At present Moscow is just as interested as Maskhadov in a partial pullout of forces from Chechnya. All we have in Central Asia is the small 201st division, which is splintered into many tactical groups. In effect there are no strategic reserves at all. Last week began an emergency transfer of 1,500 contract soldiers to the 201st, which normally does not exceed 5,000 men." In Afghanistan, Russia not only has been covertly arming and equipping the Northern Alliance but Russian specialists, advisors, pilots and other armed services personnel have taken an active part in the conflict since 1996.

The US and the UK have begun to bomb targets in Afghanistan with the apparent aim of severely impairing the Taliban, if not altogether removing it from power. Moreover, the US has landed forces in Uzbekistan (the first such engagement with a post-Soviet state), and has identified the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan along with Al-Qaeda and Egyptian Islamic Jihad as serious terrorist challengers to the world order. The US actions will reorder the security framework of Central Asia. If Russia could participate fully in the military operations, it would have

more levers to frame the post-war arrangement. Instead, Russian forces remain mired in Chechnya.

Perhaps these frustrations can explain the rather odd comments from Kazantsev's deputy, Nikolai Britvin. Asked to comment on the 29-30 September coordinated assault by the Chechen resistance on four villages of Shali, Kurchaloi, Avtury and Serzhen-yurt during which members of the pro-Russian administration were killed, Britvin said: "We deliberately watched these latest events: We didn't involve the armed forces in the fighting. The battles, as I already pointed out, were carried out by the local police units, the Chechens themselves," and "This shows that local organs are capable of carrying on the fight against the bandits." (KOMMERSANT, 2 Oct 01)

### **Cleansings against population continue**

Far from confronting the Chechen fighters, the Russian armed forces returned to the villages after the fighters had left and then started to carry out punitive operations against the inhabitants. "The federals returned to the Shali region on Sunday and began cleansings on Monday," Kommersant reported on 2 October. Those operations are still underway and have already resulted in killings, disappearances and increased numbers of refugees from the area.

The Grozny-Shali road has been blockaded for two days by residents of Prigorodnoe village who are protesting the killing of a ten-year-old boy, who died as a result of artillery barrage against his home. (RADIO LIBERTY, 8 Oct 01)

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

By Fabian Adami

### **KAZAKHSTAN**

**President Nazarbaev continues his foreign policy balancing act**

In a reciprocal visit, planned since German Foreign Minister Joschka Fischer's tour of Central Asia in May 2001, Kazakh President Nursultan Nazarbaev arrived in Berlin on 1 October, accompanied by Economy and Trade Minister Zhaksybek Kulekeyev and National Bank Chairman Grigory Marchenko, to meet with Chancellor Gerhard Schroeder, President Johannes Rau, Defense Minister Rudolf Scharping, and Foreign Minister Joschka Fischer.

While the current terrorism crisis certainly was discussed, with Germany promising to provide aid for the refugees Kazakhstan expects from Afghanistan, it was not the only issue on the table.

The agreements signed in Berlin included a treaty on security cooperation, under which Germany will provide assistance to improve Kazakhstan's customs and border controls, and Kazakh officers will be allowed to train at Germany's military schools. (MEDIA MONITORING REPORT, 5 Oct 01; via ISI Emerging Markets Database)

However, it is clear that Nazarbaev is fully aware that he cannot stray too far from the Russian line in security-related areas. Therefore, the Kazakh president has sought to channel his foreign policy efforts into matters civil and economic.

To that end, Nazarbaev, in recent weeks, has embarked on a campaign to attract and secure foreign investment. Most notable of these efforts, in terms of civil society, is the planned creation in Kazakhstan of a branch of the Aga Khan Foundation's Central Asian University, which will provide approximately US \$5 million in educational and developmental funds. Nazarbaev, while in Berlin, met informally with the Aga Khan, in order to discuss the project. (EURASIA INSIGHT, Kazakhstan Daily Digest, 4 Oct 01; via Eurasianet)

While such projects are important in their own right, it is clear that Nazarbaev's priorities lie in attracting more state and private investment. In an interview with

the German newspaper Der Spiegel prior to his departure for Berlin, Nazarbaev expressed his desire to make Germany the "Central Economic Partner of the Future" for his country, and to lure Kazakh émigrés back to their homeland. (DER SPIEGEL, 24 Sep 01; FBIS-NES-2001-0924, via World News Connection,)

Although Germany is one of the largest investors in Kazakhstan, with an annual trade turnover of DM 280 million, the United States remains the number-one target of Nazarbaev's overtures. Kazakhstan has attracted American interest because of its Caspian oil and gas resources. Until now, these have been transported mainly over Russian Territory through the Tengiz-Novorosiisk pipeline. However, this may change soon. On 4 October, Kazakh national company Oil and Gas Transport (TNG) signed a deal with US Gulf Interstate Engineering Co. to explore how best to involve Kazakhstan in the Baku-Tblisi-Ceyhan pipeline project. The project involves researching the possibility and feasibility of constructing an undersea pipeline to Baku, or of transporting oil to Baku by tanker. Part of the research project will be funded by a \$346,000 research grant from the US government. (INTERFAX, 4 Oct 01; FBIS-SOV-2001-1004, via World News Connection)

Recent policy and tax changes, seen by many as an attempt to establish government control over oil exports, have worried foreign investors, and Nazarbaev's government has swung its PR machine into action in an attempt to allay fears over regional stability and the atmosphere for investments.

Speaking in Boston on 29 September, Nazarbaev's energy advisor, Nurlan Kapparov, assured investors that the situation in the region, and forthcoming tax legislation, will pose no difficulties for investments. (KAZAKH COMMERCIAL TV REPORT, 29 Sep 01, via BBC Monitoring)

America rapidly has become a target of Kazakh foreign policy efforts, because Nazarbaev believes he has much to gain from cooperating with the United States

against Afghanistan. A few days before Nazarbaev travelled to Berlin, his foreign minister, Yerian Isidrov, was in Washington for extensive consultations with Secretary of State Colin Powell. These talks reaffirmed Kazakh support for the US; Isidrov stated that the meeting had not touched on technical questions such as the use of bases, but that with regard to all actions being planned, "the structures concerned are cooperating." (ITAR-TASS, 29 Sep 01; via BBC Monitoring) Isidrov also stated that he had issued an invitation to Colin Powell, on behalf of President Nazarbaev, to visit Kazakhstan early in November. As yet, it is unclear whether this invitation has been accepted or declined. Current developments only serve to show that Nazarbaev has every intention of continuing his policy of balancing his reliance on Russia for security, with economic interest from Europe and the United States.

## Newly Independent States: Baltic States

By Maria Metcalf

### **The risk of current coalition building**

The recent detente between Russia and the NATO, which developed in the wake of the 11 September attacks in New York and Washington DC, has played a significant role in the US efforts of coalition building. However, the Baltic states are hoping nervously that in a new effort to placate Russia, the West does not abandon the already concrete goal of including Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania in the NATO military alliance.

Recently in Germany and at the EU-Russia summit in Brussels, Russian President Vladimir Putin suggested that Russia may change its negative stance toward the NATO enlargement, and may even consider eventually joining the alliance. In spite of the wording, this statement was not as supportive of the alliance as some thought initially. Putin went on to call on the alliance to become a political organization and to say that, in such an eventuality, Russia might wish

to join. His implication, of course, was that Russia might soften its opposition to the Baltic states' inclusion in NATO if Russia were given a definitive say in the alliance. It seems that many do not see the problems of this tango with Russia. Secretary of State Colin Powell welcomed Putin's statement about the need for "NATO's evolution," and even called it "very meaningful." (ITAR-TASS, 0843 GMT, 04 Oct 01; via BBC Worldwide Monitoring) It seems that Russia has found itself in a most advantageous position since the terrorist devastation in the US, and certainly President Vladimir Putin and Russian diplomats have not hesitated to take advantage of the several opportunities that the concept of coalition building has presented to them.

### **The Baltic countries react**

Despite NATO Secretary-General George Robertson's assurances that stronger Russian ties will have no impact on NATO's enlargement process (anticipated to continue at the NATO summit in Prague in November 2002), it is clear that the Baltic countries are anxious to ensure that the previous pace of NATO enlargement will remain constant. All three countries have stated that they are ready to act according to Article 5 of the NATO Treaty (even though they are not yet NATO members) and to fulfill their obligation as members of the international coalition. Moreover, they have announced that they would open their airspace to NATO and US aircraft (although with varying conditions). Lastly, Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania have submitted their NATO Membership Action Plans (MAPs) for the year 2002, each outlining a more aggressive plan toward NATO integration, and addressing previous problems in their respective NATO bids.

In Lithuania, a poll conducted by Rinkos Tyrimai polling company shows the number of Lithuanians in favor of joining NATO after the US attacks has grown to 63.1 percent. (BNS, 1523 GMT, 20 Sep 01; FBIS-SOV-2001-0920, via World News Connection) The Lithuanian delegation at the NATO Parliamentary Assembly session, which ran from 5-9 October in Ottawa, Canada, tried to persuade the participants to continue enlargement at the 2002 Prague NATO

summit. The chairman of the Seimas Foreign Affairs Committee, Gediminas Kirkilas, served as the head of the delegation which prepared amendments to clarify ambiguous wordings in documents relating to enlargement. Additionally, "all reports and resolutions related to the alliance's enlargement" were discussed at the assembly's political committee, because the Lithuanian delegation was concerned that "some wording in the documents might be interpreted as proposals to slow down NATO's enlargement in the nearest future." (BNS, 1457 GMT, 4 Oct 01; FBIS-SOV-2001-1004, via World News Connection)

Latvian President Vaira Vike-Freiberga has underscored the readiness of the Baltic states to join NATO at the alliance's next summit. According to a poll conducted by the market and public opinion studies center SKDS, 59.4 percent of Latvian citizens now say that it is in Latvia's interest to enter NATO as soon as possible. This reflects an increase of almost 6 percent from the same poll taken earlier this year. Additionally, Latvia hosted an international conference in Riga on 21 September called NATO Enlargement: From Washington to Prague. The conference focused on boosting international dialogue on issues pertaining to NATO integration and the potential role of NATO applicant countries. Prime Minister Andris Berzins emphasized that participation in NATO is all the more important in the wake of the terrorist attacks.

In Estonia, although the new president, Arnold Ruutel, has been seeking better relations with Russia, Simmu Tiik, Estonian foreign counselor to Prime Minister Mart Laar, responded to Putin's statements in Brussels by saying that "Russia has been seeking a greater right to have a say in NATO matters since the collapse of the Warsaw Pact.... This is no breakthrough for the Baltic states." (ETA, 1058 GMT, 4 Oct 01; FBIS-SOV-2001-1004, via World News Connection)

In general, it might be noted that the very goal of a coalition reflects the temporary confluence of influence and interests, often to the expense of abandoning vital elements of mutual responsibility and careful, long-term plans.

Powell's opinion is that NATO enlargement should be conducted in a way that no nation would regard it as a threat to itself. In this case, changing the nature of NATO from a military to a mostly political alliance and/or inviting Russia to join, apart from abandoning NATO's basic mission, also would remove the incentive of most of the aspirant countries to become members. An alliance cannot be innocuous to everyone and still remain effective. Allowing Russia into the alliance or pandering to its "fears" regarding the nature of the alliance may contribute to the new coalition, but it also will undermine NATO. Accordingly, courting Russia's support of the West's newly declared "war on terrorism" could stop the previous momentum generated to invite the three Baltic countries into the most enduring alliance in modern history. Many persons, such as German Chancellor Gerhard Schroeder, and even US Secretary of State Colin Powell, may view the present detente as healing old "Cold War" wounds at last. Others, aware of the fact that Russia is nowhere near meeting any of the criteria to join NATO (no rule of law, no reform of the military, bloody ethnic war in Chechnya, still selling arms and technology to Iran, etc.) see that Putin is seizing this perfect opportunity to weaken NATO and to stop the momentum for including the Baltic states in the alliance.

It would be a tragedy for Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania if a temporary coalition were to take precedence over the fundamentals of long-term alliance-building for which they have worked so hard.

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