

**Boston University**

**OpenBU**

**<http://open.bu.edu>**

---

Institute for the Study of Conflict, Ideology and Policy

The ISCIP Analyst

---

2001-02-28

# The ISCIP Analyst, Volume VI, Issue 4

---

<https://hdl.handle.net/2144/11975>

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

## Russian Federation: Domestic Issues and Legislative Branch

By Luba Schwartzman

### **SECURITY SERVICES**

#### **Actions speak louder than words...**

Boris Labusov, head of the Russian Foreign Intelligence Service (SVR) press service, refrained from commenting on the recent arrests in Sweden and in the United States of persons suspected of spying for Russia. "We do not comment on such reports," he told Interfax. (INTERFAX, 1400 GMT, 20 Feb 01; FBIS-SOV-2001-0220, via World News Connection)

What may be indicative of Russia's attitude toward the West are two cases: 1.) Moscow's casual treatment of Andrey Knyazev, the Russian diplomat who fatally injured a Canadian woman while driving his car in Ottawa (he is being tried under article 264, part two of the Russian Criminal Code, violation of traffic and driving laws, punishable by imprisonment of up to three years, but there is no mention of manslaughter in the charges); 2.) the recent resumption of the case against Moscow Bauman University Professor Anatoly Babkin (accused of high treason in the form of espionage), earlier arrested in conjunction with Edmund Pope. (See THE NIS OBSERVED, 25 Oct 00, and 11, 29 Nov 00) (INTERFAX, 1321 GMT, 16 Feb 01; FBIS-SOV-2001-0216, and INTERFAX, 1224 GMT, 22 Feb 01; FBIS-SOV-2001-0222, via World News Connection)

Another such signal is an article that recently appeared in the government daily, Rossiyskaya gazeta, detailing the allegedly harsh and gruesome experiences of a "heroic" Russian citizen whose name has been changed at her request. The

"completely unsuspecting St. Petersburg resident" supposedly was arrested, handcuffed, photographed, fingerprinted, exposed to "terrible" prison conditions, and shipped to Chicago to serve as a witness for a trial of a certain Galitsky who had worked in the US Consulate and helped Russians with a criminal past to leave illegally for the United States. In the second half of the article, however, it turns out that our heroine had left Russia for a job in Chicago, tracked down for her by a "very reliable person" who set her up with a "cover story" for entering the United States. (ROSSIYSKAYA GAZETA, 13 Feb 01; FBIS-SOV-2001-0213, via World News Connection) The hysterical tone of the article is almost comical when juxtaposed with all the information available on Russian prisons, where 10,000 Russian prisoners die every year of hunger, tuberculosis and other illnesses -- more than 2,000 before their trials. (MAYAK RADIO, 1600 GMT, 22 Feb 01; FBIS-SOV-2001-0222, via World News Connection)

### **...but some words are still repeated**

On 22 February, at a ceremony marking the Day of the Defenders of the Fatherland, Interior Minister Vladimir Rushailo pledged to bring the "anti-terrorist campaign in Chechnya to a logical end," and restore constitutional order, lawfulness and the functionality of all state institutions. (INTERFAX, 1050 GMT, 22 Feb 01; FBIS-SOV-2001-0222, via World News Connection) Grozny Mayor Beslan Gantimirov expressed his conviction that, with the transfer of control of operations to the Federal Security Service (FSB), this will, indeed, be done, given the different approaches and methods of the FSB. (INTERFAX, 0749 GMT, 22 Feb 01; FBIS-SOV-2001-0222, via World News Connection) The primary goals, as specified by the chief of the FSB, Nikolai Patrushev, remain the same, however: destroying small bands, ascertaining the location of their leaders and "restoring order" in all settlements. (ITAR-TASS, 1239 GMT, 19 Feb 01; FBIS-SOV-2001-0219, via World News Connection)

## **POLITICAL PARTIES**

### **YABLOKO, Communists express discontent**

The central council of Russia's liberal political movement, YABLOKO, has been expressing its discontent with the government. Over the weekend of 17-18 February it passed a resolution "On the relations between the YABLOKO association and the executive power," signed by the movement's leader, Grigori Yavlinsky. The main criticism concerns Russia's development as a "bureaucratic police state," and the tendency "to put all independent sources of criticism -- the parliament, mass media, political parties, and public organizations -- under the total control of the executive power." (INTERFAX, 0818 GMT, 19 Feb 01; FBIS-SOV-2001-0219, via World News Connection) A statement issued on the following Tuesday (20 February) threatens Prime Minister Mikhail Kasyanov's government with a vote of no confidence if a number of liberalization steps are not taken. (INTERFAX, 1843 GMT, 20 Feb 01; FBIS-SOV-2001-0220, via World News Connection) In fact, a proposal for a no confidence vote was put forward -- by the Communist faction of the State Duma, but Duma Speaker Gennadi Seleznev dismissed it as premature. (ITAR-TASS, 0959 GMT, 20 Feb 01; FBIS-SOV-2001-0220, via World News Connection)

## **REGIONS**

### **A demonstration of Putin's vertical power**

In the Maritime Territory the demonstration of Putin's extension of vertical power continued. By 15 February, acting Maritime Territory Governor Valentin Dubinin and his deputies divided up responsibilities among themselves. The acting governor will be in charge of the local directorate of internal affairs, the justice directorate, the audit-and-inspection directorate, the Regional Energy Commission, the Mobilization Department, the Monitoring Directorate, and the territory's representative office within the Russian government structure. The deputy governors (6 remain of the original 13, but 2 more are to be appointed in the near future) will gain additional responsibilities. (RIA, 0319 GMT, 15 Feb 01; FBIS-SOV-2001-0215, via World News Connection) Also, the responsibilities of the four deputies of the Russian president's plenipotentiary envoy to the Far East Federal District, Konstantin Pulikovskiy, have been identified: Acting First Deputy

Governor Gennadi Apanasenko will assist in drafting the Maritime Territory 2001 budget and exercise control over the spending of federal transfers to the Maritime Territory; Acting Deputy Governor Yuri Averyanov will deal with personnel management in the governor's staff and new appointments to city and district administrations (the Soviet term "cadres" comes to mind); Acting Deputy Governor Yuri Obryagin will supervise the Maritime Territory law-enforcing bodies together with the chief federal inspector for the Maritime Territory, Pavel Lysov; and Acting Deputy Governor Mikhail Arkhipov will supervise the local state media. Pulikovsky coordinated that distribution of authority with Russian President Vladimir Putin. (RIA, 0356 GMT, 13 Feb 01; FBIS-SOV-2001-0213, via World News Connection)

## Russian Federation: Foreign Relations

By Sarah Miller

### **Cairo: Courtesies belie tensions in rocky US-Russian relationship**

After weeks of diplomatic and military posturing, US-Russian relations assumed a less acerbic manner as US Secretary of State Colin Powell and Russian Foreign Minister Igor Ivanov met for the first time in Cairo. But beyond a vague agreement to work together for international security through continued dialogue, differences remain.

Without a formal agenda, the Cairo meeting presented more of an opportunity for the sides to sound each other out in the face of mounting tensions than a real policy discussion. Powell reiterated US criticisms of Russian weapons proliferation to countries of concern such as Iran, Iraq, China, DPRK and India, while Ivanov stressed the need to find "points of coinciding interests." (CNN TONIGHT, 2008 GMT, 24 Feb 01; via lexis-nexis) However, only a week after Russia formally floated its National Missile Defense (NMD) counterproposal -- a vaguely defined non-strategic, mobile, European defense shield -- the sides

agreed in Cairo to reconvene working groups of specialists and discuss both offensive weapons and defensive systems.

### **US shows foreign policy savvy in the face of the Russian counterproposal**

In a diplomatic maneuver revealing the insight of the Bush foreign policy team, the US has cited the Russian plan as evidence that Moscow accepts the existence of the type of danger NMD is meant to counter. By taking this stance, the US has highlighted a contradiction in Russian policy, resulting from Moscow's consistent denial of a missile threat from rogue states. The Russian proposal -- characterized by Powell as merely "interesting" (LOS ANGELES TIMES, 25 Feb 01; via lexis-nexis) -- clearly represents Moscow's way of trying to ensure its inclusion in arrangements concerning a US missile defense system and preserving its own prestige as a maker of international arms control policy.

US National Security Advisor Condoleezza Rice explained US thinking in the days leading up to Cairo: "What I think we're hearing [from Russia] is an admission that there's a threat that might be addressed by missile defense." (REUTERS, 22 Feb 01; via lexis-nexis) If so, this is a diplomatic win for Washington. However, Rice admitted that the proposal does not mean Russia has changed its tone or that the US and Russia will be able to resolve their differences easily.

### **Rough US-Russian relations precede Cairo**

As if to remind the US of the importance of arms control, Russia conducted a timely test of sea-based, land-based and air-based strategic weapons on 16 February. The nearly simultaneous launches began with an SLBM launched from a submarine in the Barents Sea, followed by two ICBMs launched from the air by a Bear-11 bomber and from land by Russia's premier SS-27 Topol-M road-mobile missile. (MILITARY NEWS AGENCY, 16 Feb 01; via RussiaToday.com) Although the Russian defense ministry confirmed that the test firing had been planned far in advance, the timing of the launches sent a strong signal about

Russian strategic capabilities on the eve of its NMD counterproposal and only days before Powell and Ivanov met. In addition, the launches, when coupled with Moscow's counterproposal and continued harsh anti-NMD rhetoric, suggest that Russia is grasping for means to renew its fading prestige.

Russia accompanied military posturing with diplomatic maneuvering meant to downplay the rogue threat against which the US NMD is meant to safeguard. Russia has recently announced meetings with a variety of states -- including Iran, Iraq, North Korea, India, and China -- all of which have been singled out by the US as threats to international security. During a high-level military meeting in Moscow, Russian and Chinese officials indicated that their countries are taking steps to counter a US NMD when it is fielded. In short, if the US abrogates the ABM treaty, China and Russia will work together to improve Chinese nuclear missile technology, according to unidentified officials quoted by the Russian press. (VREMYA, 22 Feb 01; via Johnson's Russia List) Even in light of these agreements, Russia maintains that a missile threat as a result of weapons proliferation does not exist. Russian Defense Minister Igor Sergeev has called US claims that Russia is supplying rogue nations with nuclear technology "rubbish." (AGENCE FRANCE PRESSE, 15 Feb 01; via lexis-nexis)

Meanwhile, Washington clearly is emphasizing its independent national security policy. (See THE NIS OBSERVED, 14 Feb 01) "America will set its own foreign policy priorities," President Bush reiterated in recent remarks. (REUTERS, 16 Feb 01; via lexis-nexis) The most telling sign of his seriousness is the manner in which the Bush administration has avoided significant engagement with Russia while still formulating its policy. Although the sides agreed to resume arms control and START-II talks at Cairo, no firm dates have been set for this or any other US-Russian exchanges. The first opportunity that the US and Russian presidents will have to meet face to face will not occur until the July G-8 meeting in Italy. Eventually the sides may come to the table, but it is clear from

Washington's handling of the Cairo meeting and other Russian requests that it will be the one to decide when and where.

Overall, the events of the past fortnight indicate that US-Russian relations are rocky at best. As long as Russia claims to perceive US policy as a threat to its prestige and security, it will continue to cultivate ties with rogue states in exchange for economic and political benefits. Although these types of relationships are not new to Russian foreign policy, Washington is faced with the difficulty of striking a delicate balance. It wishes to convince Russia of the inevitability of NMD -- and an independent US policy -- while providing the Kremlin with enough face-saving gestures to maintain a dialogue that will facilitate negotiations on other issues when they occur.

## Russian Federation: Media

By Maria Metcalf

Money changes everything...while this adage applies to many aspects of life, both private and public, and no industry is exempt, in the Russian media business this concept reigns supreme.

### **Media-MOST lease on life extended**

The battle over Media-MOST will continue for several months. On 14 February, the Moscow Arbitration Court postponed until October Gazprom's suit against Media-MOST over the disputed 19-percent stake of NTV. On the following day, the representatives of Gazprom and the Ted Turner/George Soros-led consortium held talks regarding the consortium's interest in investing at least US \$300 million in Media-MOST, so as to buy at least a 25-percent stake in NTV. However, the meeting appeared to produce no definitive outcome. Spokespersons from both Gazprom and the Western investment consortium admitted that no agreement was made. What does that mean? Several

conclusions are possible. It could mean that Gazprom is conducting stall tactics until it can gain a legal controlling stake in NTV, as Gazprom's head, Rem Vyakhirev vowed to do "by all means available." It could mean that "while Turner initially demanded a guarantee from President Vladimir Putin that the authorities will not interfere in NTV's editorial policy, the members of the consortium have now come around to the view of Soros, who has spoken of the need to 'take Gusinsky out of the game' when it comes to NTV." (Jamestown Foundation MONITOR, 19 Feb 01) Gusinsky told a Spanish newspaper that he would sell his stake in NTV to foreign investors if "it is guaranteed 100 percent that a deal will never be reached with the Kremlin authorities that would call into question the independence of NTV." (MOSCOW TIMES, 19 Feb 01; via [www.themoscowtimes.com](http://www.themoscowtimes.com)) Conversely, Alfred Kokh, head of Gazprom-Media, told the Financial Times after the meeting with Ted Turner and company that he might allow the Western investment consortium to purchase a stake in NTV, provided that Gusinsky reduced his own stake and that the outside investors not form an alliance with other outside investors to retain control. In the same breath Kokh said that he doubted sincerely that this would happen. (FINANCIAL TIMES, 14 Feb 01)

### **Gazprom's business troubles**

Media-MOST is not the only company experiencing financial difficulty and facing foreign investor dilemmas. Gazprom's chief, Rem Vyakhirev, who on 7 February took out a full page advertisement in The Wall Street Journal accusing Media-MOST head Vladimir Gusinsky of both bad faith and negligent management in running his company, apparently has been accused of the same thing by Gazprom's foreign investors. However, these investors are not in a position to fire Vyakhirev, because they "control only two of the eleven seats on Gazprom's board of directors, and the government and management control five and four seats, respectively." (THE WALL STREET JOURNAL, 13 Feb 01) Meanwhile, Gazprom is ignoring a legal requirement for an outside audit. Additionally, a recent Audit Chamber report on the state-controlled broadcast companies ORT

and RTR reveals that both companies are in substantial debt. In ORT's case the state repeatedly has extended its \$100 million loan from 1998 without penalty. (THE MOSCOW TIMES, 27 Jan 01; via [www.themoscowtimes.com](http://www.themoscowtimes.com))

The state's inconsistency of policy with regard to the different media companies is significant. Only companies which constitute a political headache to the Russian government are expected to take "accountability" for their debts and so-called mismanagement, while hugely inefficient companies suspected of not paying the appropriate taxes lumber along unimpeded. Even more insulting to one's intelligence is that Gazprom (that pearl of probity) wants to take over control of Media-MOST and, in the words of Vyakhirev, "restore efficient management of the company and save the business of Media-MOST from otherwise inevitable disintegration."

### **Have financial pressures at the Moscow Times brought the newspaper to heel?**

On 23 January, The Moscow Times published an editorial about the Human Rights Congress titled "It's Time to Engage Not to Confront" that baffled regular readers. What was confusing was the obvious change in tone of the editorial from the previous approach taken by the paper. Traditionally, The Moscow Times had not been afraid to publish articles that challenged Putin or the government; the newspaper was viewed as the only Western news perspective in Moscow. However, the editorial stated "we don't believe that declaring a 'human rights state of emergency' is a responsible reaction to the present situation," and "such rhetoric merely deepens the divide between the government and liberal forces in society, provoking confrontation rather than facilitating a dialogue that could lead to real improvements." (THE MOSCOW TIMES, 23 Jan 01; via [www.themoscowtimes.com](http://www.themoscowtimes.com))

The eXile, a bi-weekly Moscow-based independent newspaper, published a scathing article earlier this month in which the writer Matt Taibbi accused Derk

Sauer, head of Independent Media (publisher of The Moscow Times), of selling out to the Putin government and opting for "less objectionable editorials." Taibbi said that, after Putin's rise to power, Independent Media experienced a raid wherein tax inspectors "uncovered" a multi-million-dollar debt owed to the state, and that at the same time Sauer "was made to understand that the problem could be resolved if the paper's attitude toward Chechnya changed." (THE EXILE, Issue #27/108; via [www.exile.ru](http://www.exile.ru)) Since then, Taibbi claims, Independent Media has experienced further financial problems and Matthew Bivens, whose editorials reportedly were too controversial for Sauer, was forced out of the newspaper. Taibbi concluded his article by asking, "Is a march on Prague in the paper's future?"

With everything that has been happening in the Russian media industry, Mr. Taibbi's question is a good one. Clearly, the state exerts financial and legal pressure when it wants to bring a media company to heel, as is evident in the struggle for control of Media-MOST. The state ignores the debt and tax problems of those companies that act in its interests, as was done with Gazprom, ORT and RTR. It is not a stretch to believe that The Moscow Times is fighting a similar battle with the state, even if it is less dramatic than the Media-MOST struggle. In the case of the Independent Media company, the state does not own any shares, but it is in a position to make life uncomfortable financially. In order to make money in the newspaper business in Russia, one should not challenge the government. Rather, one should write for hire, for whichever politician or business will pay the bills, and hope that the state does not decide to audit the company.

Money changes everything in the Russian media business, and not in the way it does for normal businesses. Russian president Vladimir Putin has voiced the opinion that the press "can become truly free only after it achieves economic independence." (THE CURRENT DIGEST OF THE POST-SOVIET PRESS, 14 Feb 01) But Mr. Putin, if this is so, then why does it seem that the state is doing

everything possible to ensure that no media company gains financial independence?

## Russian Federation: Armed Forces

By Richard Miller

### **New dog, old tricks.**

In a few areas of the Russian defense establishment, change appears to be in the initial stages. The seed for growth of a professional force continues to germinate as the final plans are made to initiate the reduction of 90,000 MoD civilian personnel outlined last fall. This will be the companion piece to the order recently signed by President Putin reducing uniformed military personnel by approximately 365,000. Similarly, the arms industry reform efforts begun last year are beginning to bear fruit. Military exports in 2000 were up by 34% compared to the previous year and the Ural regions of Tyumen, Chelyabinsk and Sverdlovsk reported their military, heavy machine industries had experienced output growth of between 22% and 49% for the first time in several years. (INTERFAX, 1042 GMT, 14 Feb 01; FBIS-SOV-2001-0214, and RIA, 0810 GMT, 14 Feb 01; FBIS-SOV-2001-0214, via World News Connection) However, more often than not, old familiar trends of Soviet military policies are reemerging. They are manifesting themselves in several ways, including: re-invigorating ties with former client states and friends, attempting to reverse the decade of military decline and restore military status, developing alignment with "buffer states" against perceived threats, and sending mixed messages in the dialogue to former Soviet adversaries.

### **Military efforts continue to lead outreach**

As previously reported (See THE NIS OBSERVED, 31 Jan 01), important Russian foreign policy initiatives are essentially of a military nature. Thus, details are now emerging of the results of the December visit of Defense Minister

Sergeev to Iran. Contracts for reinstated arms sales are expected to be signed by the end of the year and are reported to net as much as \$300 million per year for Russia. (INTERFAX, 1042 GMT, 15 Feb 01; FBIS-SOV-2001-0215, via World News Connection) An upcoming summit visit to Moscow by Iranian President Khatami early in March will help to finalize military transfer plans. (ITAR-TASS, 0843 GMT, 17 Feb 01; FBIS-SOV-2001-0217, via World News Connection)

### **Tajikistan**

Russian and Tajik forces held joint command post exercises 15-20 February. They involved a Russian motorized infantry division and Russian border guards based in Tajikistan. The exercise was held in the vicinity of Dushanbe, where, only two days earlier, explosions of suspected terrorist origin shook the Russian divisional headquarters. CIS counter-terrorist experts reportedly arrived, coincident with the start of the exercises. Also on 13 February, Russian Border Guards apparently were involved in a firefight along the Tajik-Afghan border, approximately 180 km southeast of Dushanbe. The growing influence the Taliban in the region has fostered Moscow's desire to retain significant forces in Tajikistan.

### **India**

Following on the heels of an aircraft deal with India, one of the largest single arms export contracts in Russian history, the resurgence of sales to this traditional customer and ally continues. In the last two weeks, Russia and India signed an agreement to create a joint multi-purpose military aircraft; had a visit by Russian Air Force Commander-in-Chief General Anatoli Kornukov, to Bangalore, lobbying for Russian contracts to upgrade Indian air defense systems; and completed India's purchase of 310 fully equipped Russian T-90 tanks. Additionally, in the naval arena, Russia's first significant overseas deployment of warships since 1996 involves three ships from the Pacific Fleet at Vladivostok heading for Mumbai (Bombay) India for an international naval parade. Other developments include the recent completion of a "Sword" Class

frigate (one of three planned) in the Baltiysky Shipyard, and completion of plans to re-fit the carrier "Gorshov," both for transfer to India.

### **Vietnam**

On their return from India, the three ships of the Russian Pacific Fleet will pay a visit to Vietnam. The timing of this visit is conveniently aligned with the opening of talks on renewing the Russian lease on the Cam Ranh Bay port facility. It also precedes President Putin's visit to Hanoi on 1-2 March. (ITAR-TASS, 1248 GMT, 16 Feb 01; FBIS-SOV-2001-0216, via World News Connection)

### **Training and exercises being restored**

In addition to the deployment of Pacific Fleet ships, Russia also held "strategic command-and-staff training" from 13-16 February. Included in these exercises were three strategic missile launches. (ITAR-TASS, 1521 GMT, 19 Feb 01; FBIS-SOV-2001-0219) One ballistic missile submarine (SSBN) fired from the Barents Sea with impact in the Kamchatka Peninsula. (INTERFAX, 1200 GMT, 16 Feb 01; FBIS-SOV-2001-0216, via World News Connection) The successful launch of a land-based Topol missile may result in a service life extension of the entire class of missiles by 5-10 years. (INTERFAX, 1255 GMT, 16 Feb 01; FBIS-SOV-2001-0216, via World News Connection)

### **Continuing to buttress against NATO in the Near Abroad**

"The incorporation of the Baltic States into NATO directly threatens the security interests of Russia," according to a statement by Defense Minister Sergeev. (INTERFAX, 1516 GMT, 19 Feb 01; FBIS-SOV-2001-0219, via World News Connection) If NATO continues to expand, "Russia reserves the right to draw the corresponding conclusions and take steps to guarantee its own security" according to Gen. Leonid Ivashov, head of the defense ministry's International Military Cooperation Department. (INTERFAX, 0827 GMT, 16 Feb 01; FBIS-SOV-2001-0216, via World News Connection) As Russia describes continued NATO expansion as unacceptable, it maneuvers increasingly to influence and

control the former Soviet republics so as to create a "buffer zone." Such considerations may have influenced also Russia's decision to participate in the NATO Baltic Sea (BALTOPS) 2001 exercise. Russian officials are attending planning talks and are rumored to be sending a destroyer to participate this summer. If they do, it will be the first time in years that the Russian Navy has participated in such an exercise with numerous NATO countries (over 40 ships are scheduled to take part). (PAP, 1405 GMT, 7 Feb 01; FBIS-EEU-2001-0207, via World News Connection)

## **Ukraine**

Ukrainian officials recently met with a NATO joint working group on military reform. Under discussion was a review of Ukrainian Naval policy and the benefits of possibly creating a unified Navy, combining current naval and border force coast guard units. Also considered were Ukrainian interests in both the Black Sea and the Sea of Azov. (INTELNEWS, 0700 GMT, 7 Feb 01; FBIS-SOV-2001-0207, via World News Connection) Chafing at NATO involvement in the Ukraine, Russia has been very active in pursuing an agenda of gaining widespread influence in Ukraine, particularly on security issues.

President Putin, accompanied by dozens of officials (many from military-industrial concerns), visited Ukraine on 12 February. In addition to continuing previous discussions over the use of Black Sea naval facilities, he and Ukrainian President Kuchma signed further agreements on military-technical cooperation to ensure mutual access to military supplies and products, and finalized a deal for Ukraine to provide several billion rubles worth of components for the Russian shipbuilding industries. Included in this agreement are navigation systems, radar, sonar, other weapons control systems and gas turbine engines to be used in the export of frigates under construction for India as discussed earlier. (ITAR-TASS, 1008 GMT, 10 Feb 01; FBIS-SOV-2001-0210, via World News Connection) The two leaders, visiting aircraft production facilities that are working on Russian-Ukrainian projects, also highlighted the aerospace industry. Meanwhile, the two

foreign ministers, Igor Ivanov of Russia and Anatoliy Zlenko of Ukraine, worked on further details of an issue of interest to both navies -- border definition in the Sea of Azov and Straits of Kerch. (ITAR-TASS, 1901 GMT, 16 Feb 01; FBIS-SOV-2001-0216, via World News Connection)

The leader of the national-democratic Ukrainian Narodny Rukh party, Yuriy Kostenko, has described the recent Russian visit as an attempt to create greater dependency on Moscow and to push Ukraine into a military-political union with Russia. He warned that this development was extremely dangerous, given Kyiv's existing dependency on Russia for energy sources. (INTERFAX, 1326 GMT, 13 Feb 01; FBIS-SOV-2001-0213, via World News Connection)

### **Belarus**

Officials from both countries are completing the military doctrine of the "Russian-Belarusian union state." Described as "defensive" in nature, this document essentially merges the two militaries into a common force. The forging of this tie may be linked also to Russia's anticipation of possible accession of the Baltic states to NATO. While command-level frameworks are established, Russian and Belarusian military design bureaus have completed jointly a raiding and reconnaissance vehicle which is well armored and heavily armed -- an attractive prospect on the international market. (ITAR-TASS, 0821 GMT, 15 Feb 01; FBIS-SOV-2001-0215, via World News Connection)

### **Georgia**

The Georgian Navy commander held meetings with NATO representatives on 7 February to develop details for the upcoming Partnership of Peace (PfP) humanitarian exercise in the Black Sea, hosted by Georgia. Here, too, Russia is engaging in many levels of military discussion with Georgia to further Russian interests and to counter NATO. On the day of the meeting with the NATO delegation, Georgian Defense Minister David Tevzadze met with the militantly anti-Western Russian General Leonid Ivashov. While the issues surrounding the

previously agreed Russian troops withdrawals from bases in Georgia and the newly imposed Russian visa regime on Georgian citizens remain unresolved, it was agreed that military cooperation between the two countries will resume and be formalized in a written agreement, expected to be signed in June.

(INTERFAX, 0818 GMT, 14 Feb 01; FBIS-SOV-2001-0214, via World News Connection)

The ongoing visa dispute between Moscow and Tbilisi could be a sticking point if the Russians continue to force visas on Georgian citizens working in Russia. The visa regime may have been imposed as a stick to force Georgia to cease insisting on Russia honoring the promised withdrawal from military bases in Georgia. If the visa problem continues, Georgia has indicated it will reply in kind - forcing Russian citizens in Georgia, including military personnel, to return to Russia to obtain visas. (GEORGIAN TV1, 1600 GMT, 16 Feb 01; FBIS-SOV-2001-0216, via World News Connection)

## **Split Dialogue and Rhetoric**

### **United States**

In scathing remarks, Gen. Ivashov claimed that the US is destabilizing the international situation by assuming a global police role and subverting the UN Security Council. (ITAR-TASS, 1931 GMT, 16 Feb 01; FBIS-SOV-2001-0216, via World News Connection) He went on to call the recent US air strikes in Iraq an "affront to international security and the world community" and the Bush Administration as "disregard[ing] international and humanitarian standards and principles." (INTERFAX, 1925 GMT, 16 Feb 01; FBIS-SOV-2001-0216, via World News Connection) Referring to recent statements by US Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld and National Security Advisor Condoleezza Rice, he further blamed the US for chilling rhetoric. "We feel as if a cowboy-like assault has been made on Russia. A propaganda campaign has been unleashed which is aimed at denigrating the role and prestige of the Russian Federation in the international

arena." (ITAR-TASS, 0827 GMT, 16 Feb 01; FBIS-SOV-2001-0216, via World News Connection)

Of course, US National Missile Defense (NMD) plans continue to draw harsh words from President Putin, several senior military officers and even former Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev. Harsh remarks concerning NMD and withdrawal from or modification to the 1972 ABM treaty, as well as recent strategic missile tests constitute Moscow's public reaction. Yet, subtle signals in selected statements hint at a willingness to discuss NMD in the context of arms reductions. In fact, President Putin recently stated, "a real threat [is in] the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, international terrorism, aggressive separatism, organized crime, drug trafficking, and ecological disasters, which might seriously upset strategic stability as a whole." (INTERFAX, 2101 GMT, 7 Feb 01; FBIS-SOV-2001-0207, via World News Connection) Russian Security Council Secretary Sergei Ivanov indicated that Russia and the US could have "a calm dialogue" on all issues pertaining to NMD and possible threats from rogue states. Commenting on recent Bush Administration statements about new weapons development, Ivanov described them as indications that Bush is "adapt[ing] to new conditions for the development of their [US] own armed forces. There is nothing bad or threatening in this, we [Russia] have also recently discussed the improvement of our military organization, taking the future into account." (INTERFAX, 1012 GMT, 15 Feb 01; FBIS-SOV-2001-0215, via World News Connection) Major General Vladimir Belous, a professor at the Academy of Military Sciences, went so far as to say that, under conditions of stability and trust, Russia and the United States could develop missile interceptors jointly for use against third countries. (ITAR-TASS, 1447 GMT, 7 Feb 01; FBIS-SOV-2001-0207, via World News Connection) The mixed signals may indicate the opening President Bush needs to engage the Russians in an NMD discussion. Another possible service life extension of the Topol missile could become an increasingly important factor in the Russian strategic design, by simply having a bigger arsenal with which to "bargain" in any possible negotiation.

## **Japan**

General Ivashov stated "we are now actively developing military cooperation with our Japanese neighbors." Referring to staff talks planned later in the year, he continued, "we are happy to receive them, as both parties have realized the benefit" of such contacts. (ITAR-TASS, 1038 GMT, 16 Feb 01; FBIS-SOV-2001-0216, via World News Connection) Despite these sentiments, during exercises four Russian bombers and fighters flew directly towards the Japanese island of Hokkaido. While the Russians deny it, the aircraft apparently violated Japanese airspace, resulting in a scramble of Japanese fighters and a Japanese protest. (INTERFAX, 0855 GMT, 14 Feb 01; FBIS-SOV-2001-0214, via World News Connection)

## **Norway**

On the one hand, the Russians continue to work through contract agreements with Norwegian firms to support raising the submarine Kursk from the Barents Sea floor this summer, and Defense Minister Sergeev claims that "good prospects exist for the development of military ties. In particular, there are opportunities to expand contacts between the Russian Northern Fleet and the Norwegian Navy, and also between the Leningrad Military District and Norwegian land forces." (INTERFAX, 1516 GMT, 19 Feb 01; FBIS-SOV-2001-0219, via World News Connection) On the other hand, a Russian defense ministry source was very critical of planned US-Norwegian military exercises at Norway's training ground in Halkvarre. The proximity to the Russian border was alleged to be one of the main points of Russian concern, according to the source. (INTERFAX, 1643 GMT, 19 Feb 01; FBIS-SOV-0219, via World News Connection) As with the Japanese airspace incident, two Russian bombers apparently violated Norwegian airspace resulting in a similar response -- scrambled Norwegian fighter-interceptors and a protest. (INTERFAX, 1633 GMT, 14 Feb 01; FBIS-SOV-2001-0214, via World News Connection)

## **Conclusion**

With military reform efforts initiated in Russia, Moscow's military policies in practice continue to resemble Soviet days of old. Russia has actively pressured former Soviet republics to blunt the growing call and enthusiasm for accession to NATO. Courting former adversaries, where benefit may ensue, the Russians also have sent warning signs through sharp rhetoric and actions. Traditionally, this tactic is directed at the United States, however, Japan and Norway recently have experienced this behavior as well.

Vigorous arms sales to former client states and allies boost the Russian defense industry and provide revenue -- both aspects assisting in the repair and reform of the Russian armed forces. The naval visits to India and Vietnam also are consistent with "show the flag" prestige building and with Russian designs on regaining status as a genuine naval power.

Finally, the Russians allege that the Taliban and fundamental Islamic movements are threats. With military initiatives in Iran, India and Tajikistan, when looking at the map one must also consider the Russian "encirclement" of Afghanistan and Pakistan as an attempt to isolate these "threats."

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

By Tammy Lynch

### **UKRAINE**

#### **Will the communists save Kuchma from the bodyguard?**

Just one week ago, as demonstrations in Ukraine dwindled and Prime Minister Viktor Yushchenko indicated his support for President Leonid Kuchma, it seemed that "Kuchmagate" was soon to become a part of history. Then, during what The New York Times called "a clandestine rendezvous in a Central European country," Kuchma's former bodyguard, Mikola Melnichenko, dropped the third

and fourth shoes. In an interview with the paper, Melnichenko charged "there is no greater criminal in Ukraine than Kuchma," and suggested that his secretly recorded audio tapes would show Kuchma's complicity in everything from money laundering to the grenade attack on his opponent, Natalia Vitrenko, during the recent presidential campaign. (THE NEW YORK TIMES, 26 Feb 01)

The interview came as a shock, particularly since things had been going so well for Kuchma. Just days before, he had scored a major coup when the Communist Party decided not to support a motion that could have led to the ouster of Kuchma's prosecutor-general, Mykhaylo Potebenko. Along with Kuchma's resignation, Potebenko's removal had been one of the primary demands of anti-Kuchma protesters. As a staunch opponent of Kuchma, Communist Party leader Petro Symonenko was expected to support any measure weakening the president's allies. That assumption was obviously wrong. Today, Symonenko has become, at least temporarily, Kuchma's de facto partner -- potentially earning for his party a place as the most important member of a new parliamentary majority coalition.

When a vote of no confidence in Potebenko came before the parliament on 21 February, the Communist-led leftist parliamentary bloc followed the lead of several parties run or supported by Ukraine's most influential oligarchs. They all abstained from the vote, saving the job of Potebenko, Kuchma's closest ally during the Gongadze investigation. "Ukraine's President Leonid Kuchma," wrote the Financial Times, "faced with the biggest threat to his rule in more than six years in office,... received support from an unexpected quarter: the Communist Party."(FINANCIAL TIMES, 22 Feb 01) With that, the communists showed the weakness of the center-right parties in parliament, and became the most important party of the future in Ukraine.

Soon it became clear that some type of deal may have been reached between Kuchma, the businessmen who support him and the communists who want a

piece of the action. A new coalition indeed may have been formed. But is this coalition truly realistic? And most important, given Melnichenko's revelations, does it make any difference? Can a party that advocates a return to central planning work effectively with parties run by men who have amassed wealth from privatization? Will a leader dependent on grass-roots support help to buttress a man who is disgraced in the eyes of the people?

The Communist Party leader is seen by many as Ukraine's equivalent to Russia's Vladimir Zhirinovskiy and Gennady Zyuganov -- but without the same willingness to embrace euphemism and compromise. Symonenko's Communist Party will never be called anything but "Communist." He is unapologetic about his nostalgia for the Soviet Union, and proudly advocates reunification with Russia. During the 1999 presidential election, he campaigned by waving Soviet flags and carrying pictures of Stalin. But he can be pragmatic, as evidenced by his actions throughout "Kuchmagate." Will he sacrifice some of his Leninist ideology for the right price?

Clearly, Kuchma has shown himself willing to concede just about anything to maintain power. As the situation becomes more desperate, the concessions naturally increase. From social programs to cabinet positions, Symonenko undoubtedly has been offered many forms of compensation for his current and future support. Whether he will accept them, whether Kuchma and Ukraine can really afford to pay them, and whether Melnichenko's latest bombshells make the entire point moot, however, are the biggest questions still to be answered.

## **MOLDOVA**

### **To Russia with love?**

Payback can be painful, as the president and parliament of Moldova discovered on 25 February. They and their parties were summarily trounced -- with many ousted from government completely -- when the voters of Moldova held their

government responsible for the chaos that has engulfed the country. And who can blame them?

For month upon month, the government has concerned itself with nothing but power struggles, often resulting in the sabotage of a relatively effective government. The need for new parliamentary elections itself was created by almost two years of bitter battles between President Petru Lucinschi and various parliamentary leaders. When, early in 1999, Lucinschi announced that he would hold a referendum to increase his powers at the expense of parliament, legislators responded with vigor. They accused the president, probably correctly, of attempting to sabotage the work of then-Prime Minister Ion Sturza. Sturza had been displaying admirable skill at his job and was enjoying increasing popularity. After years of stagnation, Sturza had finally begun to move Moldova forward, and had been receiving almost unanimous praise for his government's moves toward reform. The IMF had predicted a 2-3 percent rise in GDP for 2000 after years of steady decline (INTERFAX, 5 Nov 99; via lexis-nexis) and Sturza had negotiated new deals with Moldova's neighbors for electricity delivery. He had reached out also, with increasing success, to the EU and NATO.

Then Lucinschi reached out to the communists, helping to form a coalition to bring down Sturza's government and plunge his country into the abyss where it still resides. Although it might have been possible for the rest of the parties in parliament to work together so as to block the communists and support Sturza, they chose not to do so. Perhaps the spoils resulting from Sturza's fall were too enticing. Sturza's government was toppled.

Shortly thereafter, when Communist Party leader Vladimir Voronin, who showed himself a master at political strategy throughout this entire affair, decided that Lucinschi was no longer useful, he switched sides and helped his colleagues to create a parliamentary republic. With that, Lucinschi was gone. All that remained

was for Voronin to wait for the rest of the parties in Moldova's parliament to prove unable to form a ruling coalition. He didn't have to wait long.

So now the communists control Moldova. Voronin has declared his intention to form a union with Russia and Belarus. Will the two Slav countries want Moldova? And would Romania quietly accept this? As usual, much remains in flux and unclear. Voronin has suggested that he will govern based on pragmatism, not ideology. "If it is in the state's interest to privatize, we will privatize. If it is in the state's interest to nationalize, we will nationalize." (ASSOCIATED PRESS, 26 Feb 01; via America Online)

Meanwhile, the IMF and EU are practically throwing money at Moldova, perhaps hoping to persuade the Communist Party to maintain ties with the West. Perhaps their strategy will be successful. Or perhaps Moldova will be absorbed into the Russia-Belarus "union."

## Newly Independent States: Caucasus

By Miriam Lansky

### **AZERBAIJAN**

#### **Why publish the OSCE texts?**

All segments of Azerbaijani society swiftly condemned three OSCE proposals dating from 1997 and 1998 once the texts were "leaked" by the Azerbaijani foreign ministry to the official newspaper, Azerbaijan, which published them on 21 February.

The July 1997 proposal represents the so-called "package approach" which attempts to resolve all the outstanding issues in one document. In the phraseology of that draft, "Nagorno-Karabakh is a state and territorial formation within the confines (v sostave) of Azerbaijan." OSCE peacekeepers would be

introduced to facilitate the return of refugees and to police the Lachin corridor which connects Armenia and Nagorno-Karabakh. The second proposal, from December 1997, the so-called "phased approach," would provide security guarantees to Nagorno-Karabakh and return some Armenian-occupied districts (east of Nagorno-Karabakh) to Azerbaijan and then begin talks on the status question. [For in-depth analysis, see Gerard Libaridian, *THE CHALLENGE OF STATEHOOD: ARMENIAN POLITICAL THINKING SINCE INDEPENDENCE* (Crane Books: 1999). For a brief summary of the texts published last week, see RFE/RL CAUCASUS REPORT, 23 Feb 01.] The third proposal, the "common state" put forth in November 1998, would grant Nagorno-Karabakh virtually all the attributes of an independent state and anchor it in a loose confederation with Azerbaijan. (BAKINSKI RABOCHI, 21 February 01; BBC Monitoring, via [habarlar-1@usc.edu](mailto:habarlar-1@usc.edu))

The immediate effect of the publication has been to consolidate Azerbaijani public opinion in opposition to accepting the terms proposed in the three documents. "The authorities have finally come to appreciate the need for gaining or even leaning on public support," commented Azarbaycan on 21 February. (BBC Monitoring, via lexis-nexis) Statements from refugee groups, parliamentary and non-parliamentary opposition, and Azerbaijani experts all leave no doubt that the bilateral talks to be held in Paris on 4 March hold out no promise of success.

The more than 40 political parties condemned the proposals, which also came under scrutiny in parliament on 23 February. (RFE/RL AZERBAIJAN SERVICE, 23 Feb 01) One after another, the representatives of the democratic opposition stood up in parliament and called for a military solution. (ANS, 1700 GMT, 24 Feb 01; BBC Summary of World Broadcasts, via lexis-nexis) As compared with them, President Heydar Aliiev looked like a dovish senior statesman as he announced through his former adviser and Azerbaijan's most highly regarded foreign policy expert, Vafa Guluzade, merely that no peace agreement would be signed in Paris. (TURAN, 1400 GMT, 24 Feb 01; via lexis-nexis) All of this

posturing and maneuvering is cast against the background of hunger-striking invalid veterans being forcibly removed from the protest, arrested and denounced.

Responding to Aliiev's invitation for political parties to submit their own proposals, Etibar Mammadov, the leader of the opposition, Party for National Independence of Azerbaijan (PNIA), set out the party program for regulating the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. (TURAN, 1603 GMT, 26 Feb 01; FBIS-SOV-2001-0226, via World News Connection) The demands of the opposition are much tougher than those pursued by the present government. They are:

- Unconditional liberation of the occupied territories and the return of the Azerbaijani population;
- If Armenia refuses to recognize Azerbaijan's territorial integrity, then talks with Armenia should cease;
- Turkey should be made a Minsk group co-chair to balance those co-chairs with influential Armenian lobby groups. (This refers to the recent recognition of the Armenian genocide by the French parliament);
- Talks on Nagorno-Karabakh's status can begin only after refugees return to their homes.

According to an Armenian paper (ARAVOT, 21 Feb 01; BBC Monitoring, via harbarlar-1@usc.edu) the third proposal, the so-called "common state" formula, has not been altered since 1998. That plan is the brainchild of Yevgeni Primakov, former Russian spy-master and prime minister, remembered in Baku chiefly for his leading role in the massacre of Azerbaijani civilians by Soviet military and special forces on 20 January 1990. This proposal begins with the following principle: "Nagorny-Karabakh is a state and territorial entity in the form of a republic and forms a common state with Azerbaijan within its internationally recognized borders." (BAKINSKI RABOCHI, 21 Feb 01; BBC Monitoring, via harbarlar-1@usc.edu) Under this formulation, therefore, Nagorno-Karabakh is a

state but Azerbaijan is not! That the "common state" idea has not been modified since November 1998 may mean only that it hasn't been discussed since then.

While they certainly expose the pro-Armenian slant of the OSCE approach, the 1997 and 1998 texts are not clearly relevant for the present negotiations. In theory, all three proposals remain on the table, if the sides wish to discuss them. That does not mean that any of the drafts provide the basis for the bilateral talks, at present mediated by France's President Jacques Chirac. Moreover, the text that seemed to have the greatest potential for success remains secret. Progress on the framework agreement developed by Presidents Heyder Aliev and Robert Kocharian in 1999 with US mediation was derailed by the assassinations in the Armenian parliament in October 1999. The publication of that text and subsequent modifications would give observers an opportunity to compare proposals and provide a more accurate picture of the range of available possibilities.

Another immediate (and perhaps not so coincidental) development is the postponement of the summit of Caspian states, at Iran's request, which had been scheduled for next week. That meeting, a follow-up to the Putin-Aliev summit which was held in January 2001, was expected to approve a legal regime for the Caspian Sea that would facilitate progress towards the construction of the Baku-Ceyhan pipeline.

## **CHECHNYA**

### **Budanov goes on trial**

On 27 March 2000, Col. Yuri Budanov, recipient of the Order of Courage award, abducted at gunpoint an 18-year-old Chechen woman, Kheda Kungaeva, from her home, took her to his trailer, beat her, and then strangled her. That much is beyond dispute. However, Budanov maintains that Kungaeva was a sniper who had killed some of his men. According to Budanov, she tried to fight him during the interrogation, so he lost control and strangled her. On those grounds major

Moscow papers defend Budanov and a London-based reporting network suggests that he's a sacrificial lamb. (IWPR'S CAUCASUS REPORTING SERVICE, 23 Feb 01) Could it be true that there was an element of self-defense to Budanov's actions? The Budanov case boils down to the ugly question: Was Kheda Kungaeva raped before or after she was murdered? According to forensic evidence obtained by Human Rights Watch, she was raped an hour before her death. ([www.hrw.org](http://www.hrw.org))

### **Mass graves contain bodies of 'disappeared'**

In a statement circulated on 27 February, Human Rights Watch called for an urgent international investigation of a mass grave found near Khankala, the main Russian military base in Chechnya. Law enforcement authorities cordoned off the site after the grave was found to contain bodies of people who had "disappeared" from military custody during the last year.

"The mass grave discovered near Khankala is not the first unmarked grave to be found in Chechnya. Throughout the past six months, unmarked graves containing the bodies of people who had previously 'disappeared' in the custody of Russian troops were found in several villages, including Starye Atagi, Dzhalka, Gekhi, Duba-Yurt and Mesker-Yurt. Many of the bodies had been severely mutilated. Injuries commonly found on these bodies included broken limbs, scalped body parts, cut off fingertips, knife and gunshot wounds. "

([www.hrw.org](http://www.hrw.org).)

### **Market-oriented camps**

Anna Politkovskaya, the Novaya gazeta journalist who was detained, threatened and humiliated by FSB officers in the Vedeno region while documenting the plight of Chechen civilians, published her account of the ordeal, "The concentration camp with a commercial slant," on 26 February. Politkovskaya's story corroborates numerous testimonies from Chechen survivors of those camps who recount beatings, rapes, torture and inhuman conditions.

Politkovskaya reportedly was seized by FSB agents who subjected her to sexual harassment, intimidation and attempted provocation, after she conducted an interview with the commander of the 45th Airborne Regiment. That colonel (whom she does not identify by name) told her that he was tired of the war and would be grateful if the civilians started doing their part and let him go home to his family. He showed her pits in the ground, six meters deep, where Chechens are held after they are seized in "cleansings." The colonel explained that the practice was initiated at the behest of General Baranov, the commander of the group of forces, who inspected the base and suggested that the pits they dug for garbage be used for prisoners. The colonel did not deny that Chechens held at the base were ransomed from the federal forces by their families.

Immediately after this interview, the FSB officers detained her without making any formal charges. They dismissed her press credentials, claiming that Basaev had paid off Yastrzhembsky and that Politkovskaya was herself a fighter. Later she was threatened with execution and told that her children would suffer. She was released after an FSB agent delivered her to the main base at Khankala, where military inspectors took charge of her case. Politkovskaya's story emphasizes the unresolved competition between the FSB and the military. It sounds very much as if the colonel were trying to tell a story and the FSB was trying to stop him. The way in which Politkovskaya portrays them, the colonel is experienced, decent, and reasonable, while the FSB agents are immature, arrogant, emotionally unbalanced thugs.

Another incident related by Politkovskaya deserves mention. Vakha, a former security services officer who now collects information about atrocities in Chechnya, related the following to her: Shamil Basaev and his brigade stayed in his village, Tovszeni. The residents hoped that, at last, Basaev would be arrested, but quite the opposite transpired. Federal forces were pulled back until

after the fighters had retreated into the mountains. Only when Basaev left, did the military start "cleansing" the villagers who had no connection to Basaev.

## Newly Independent States: Central Asia

By Lt. Col. James DeTemple

### **Western attempts to foster stability include non-military efforts**

Western assistance to the Central Asian states is not limited to military exercises under NATO auspices. Additional support comes from institutions such as the Marshall Center, which assists the Central Asian states in their efforts to establish national security structures, foster regional cooperation and resolve security problems. Thus, the Kyrgyzstan International Institute for Strategic Studies and the George C. Marshall Center organized a seminar on civil-military relations in Bishkek from 29 January-1 February to discuss Kyrgyz security issues. 42 Kyrgyz officials from the parliament, news media, and ministries of defense, interior and foreign affairs discussed the military and society, including parliament's role in formulating national security policy and exercising democratic control of military forces. The Kyrgyzstan civil-military relations seminar underscored the Marshall Center's long-held goal of enhancing stability in Central Asia.

The seminar featured presentations by experts from France, Germany, the Netherlands, Poland, the United Kingdom and the United States on the role of legislatures and military institutions in democratic societies. The conference gave both civilian and military officials a unique opportunity to exchange ideas with all sides agreeing on the need to establish a "broad-based dialogue" on Kyrgyzstan's armed forces and defense policy. The group also recommended enhancing parliamentary oversight of defense policy and the armed forces, in addition to involving the public in the military reform process, improving soldiers' quality of life and restoring prestige to military service. (Marshall Center

CONFERENCE SUMMARY, 1 Feb 01) Indeed, establishing an apolitical, professional military capable of responding to regional crisis, including humanitarian assistance, should be a priority.

The George C. Marshall European Center for Security Studies, based in Garmisch, Germany, was established in November 1992 under the United States European Command to expand defense and security contacts with the emerging democracies in Central and Eastern Europe and Eurasia. It will be coordinating the Central Asia Regional Security Conference in Kazakhstan in June. Last year's conference on "Promoting Stability in Central Asia" in Tashkent brought together officials from Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan in assessing the potential for regional conflict. (Marshall Center PRESS RELEASE, 10 May 00) Central Asia is beleaguered by security problems such as international terrorism and drug trafficking. Porous and unstable borders in addition to the war in Afghanistan are continuous sources of instability. Additional problems come from the Central Asian countries themselves. The Center's Dr. Roger D. Kangas, a Central Asia expert, explained that "the state-building problems of the five states resemble those of other post-colonial countries. Their histories prior to the Soviet period did not revolve around entities called 'Uzbekistan,' 'Kazakhstan,' etc. ... thus the current leaders must establish what it is to be a [modern] state. ... Quite frankly, they are starting from scratch and it's a difficult process."

## Newly Independent States: Baltic States

By Kate Martin

### **Moscow taketh, and Moscow giveth away...**

A 10 February meeting between Latvian President Vaira Vike-Freiberga and Russian President Vladimir Putin in Austria appeared to go fairly well, although

subsequent statements by other Russian officials make it quite clear that progress in terms of improving relations will continue to be halting, at best.

The meeting between the two presidents proceeded smoothly in large part because few issues of contention were discussed. "Mr. Putin said that the NATO issue was very complicated and that during the first meeting it would be better to put it aside and not talk about it," Vike-Freiberga said after the meeting. (BNS, 2200 GMT, 10 Feb 01; FBIS-SOV-2001-0211, via World News Connection). Acceding to Putin's wish to skip a discussion of NATO was unproblematic, since Russia's stated opposition to the alliance's expansion has not stopped Baltic aspirations to be part of that expansion.

Vike-Freiberga gave no ground on the topic of the recent spate of war crimes trials (of former KGB officers) being held in Latvia, as she asserted that there was no way to exert political influence upon judicial proceedings in her country. (BNS, 2216 GMT, 10 Feb 01; FBIS-SOV-2001-0211, via World News Connection) As to the treatment of ethnic Russians in Latvia, in the classic *pas de deux* of diplomacy, both participants left the talks persuaded that he/she had gained the upper hand. Putin reportedly told Vike-Frieberga that ethnic Russian residents continued to experience difficulties, reiterating -- in a watered-down manner -- a claim Russia often makes. Without contradicting Putin, the Latvian president said she was ready "to do everything possible to ensure the observance of internationally recognized human rights standards." Since she has stated previously her belief that Latvia already is meeting such standards, Vike-Frieberga was conceding little when she offered that assurance to Putin. "I am ready to help those experiencing problems, especially elderly people who find it difficult to get adjusted to a new setting," she added. (INTERFAX, 0659 GMT, 11 Feb 01; FBIS-SOV-2001-0211, via World News Connection) The important part of that intended-to-be-reassuring statement, of course, is that help will be provided to those persons trying to adjust, as opposed to those attempting to create their own Russian enclave on Latvian soil.

The latter concept was proven to be very much a real issue when Garold Astakhov, a member of Latvia's Russian Community, decried the end of international monitoring of the human rights situation. Astakhov explained the reasoning behind his letter to the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE), providing an interesting perspective on the continued difficulties Latvia will face with members of its ethnic Russian minority. "We pointed out the mass lack of citizenship, violations of freedom of speech (even private television and radio companies are required to broadcast in Latvian for 80 percent of their total broadcast time) ... arbitrary alteration of names and surnames of representatives of ethnic minorities..." he said. The community seeks the unconditional grant of citizenship to all residents who lived in the country in 1991, Astakhov said. "We see the 'zero option' as the only right and fair solution in our situation, without any dues, vows, humiliating promises of loyalty," he added. (BNS, 1101 GMT, 7 Feb 01; FBIS-SOV-2001-0207, via World News Connection) The truly compelling question, of course, is why anyone would want to become a citizen of a country when he would view a pledge of allegiance to that country as "humiliating."

While Putin's participation in the talks may have signaled a willingness to re-open dialogue with the Baltic states, in no way did it indicate an end to the rhetoric spewing forth from Moscow. A statement released by the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs asserted that, with the prosecution of defendants charged with war crimes, "an atmosphere of ideological persecution is being whipped up in Latvia," adversely affecting Russo-Latvian relations. (ITAR-TASS, 1423 GMT, 12 Feb 01; FBIS-SOV-2001-0212, via World News Connection) Moreover, Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Aleksandr Avdeev warned that the Latvian mass media had misinterpreted the ramifications of the presidents' meeting. Aleksandrs Bartasevics, a Latvian MP who met with Avdeev, reported Avdeev's assertion that politicians and the media had exaggerated hopes about a changed Russian

attitude on issues of contention between the two states. (BNS, 1836 GMT, 15 Feb 01; FBIS-SOV-2001-0215, via World News Connection)

### **How big is the Russian hurdle to NATO aspirants?**

Lest any of the other Baltic states think that the road to the West is one-directional, the NATO deputy secretary-general recently reminded all of the need to look both ways -- westward and eastward -- before attempting to cross. Klaus-Peter Klaiber told Estonian officials that, while their country is making good progress toward NATO, Tallinn also must promote good relations with Russia, which remains an important factor in the maintenance of European security. (ETA NEWS AGENCY, 1800 GMT, 9 Feb 01; FBIS-SOV-2001-0210, via World News Connection) The importance of Russia as an obstacle to NATO expansion, however, remains open to debate. Certainly, Russian officials are working actively to convince the West that Moscow's anti-expansion stand constitutes an insurmountable hurdle. As NATO Secretary-General George Robertson prepared to visit Moscow and assuage Russian concerns about possible Baltic membership in the military alliance, a representative of the defense ministry looked for a sword to rattle. If the West were to ignore Moscow's protests and allow the Baltic states into NATO, General Leonid Ivashov warned, "Russia reserves the right to adopt corresponding conclusions and steps to guard its own security." (AGENCE FRANCE PRESSE, 16 Feb 01; via nexis-lexis)

Indeed, an even bigger sword was rattled by Russian MP Dmitri Rogozin, chairman of the Duma's Committee on International Affairs. Russian-Estonian relations would be ruined if that Baltic state were to accede to NATO. Lest he be considered too subtle in his threats, Rogozin explained how the relations would deteriorate: "Nonstrategic missiles and long-distance artillery would be targeted on Estonia... All strategic NATO sites -- bridges, airfields, power plants, ports, administrative buildings -- would become targets for them. Would these measures by the Russian military add anything positive to our relations? I'm not

convinced of it." (BNS, 1354 GMT, 16 Feb 01; FBIS-SOV-2001-0216, via World News Connection)

In light of such statements, it will be interesting to see if Moscow continues to assert that the Baltic states don't need Western guarantees of security, and if anyone in the West believes such assertions.

Copyright Boston University Trustees 2001

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

*Analyst*. This article was originally published at

<http://www.bu.edu/iscip/digest/vol6/ed0604.html>.