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Russian Federation: Executive Branch and Security Services

By Susan Cavan

PRESIDENCY

Controversy over tape continues

Following a Duma appeal to President Yel'tsin for the suspension of Anatoli Chubais and Viktor Ilyushin until the completion of an investigation into the arrests of campaign staffers Yevstafyev and Lisovsky, Moskovsky Komsomolets (23 November 1996, pp. 1,3) returned to the issue of the secret tape transcript (See 11/20/96 Digest) and the events of June 19-20, 1996. According to MK, Procurator-General Skuratov confirmed that the tape did exist and had been attached to the investigation for some time, but that they had not yet confirmed that the voices on the tape were indeed Chubais and Ilyushin. The Procurator, when pressed by the Duma, promised a full investigation of the tape, including the questioning of Chubais. In the meantime, the tape has been sent to the president's Communication and Information Agency (FAPSI).

In reviewing the circumstances of the arrests of Lisovsky and Yevstafyev, MK published excerpts of both the arresting officers' reports and statements by the suspects. The MK excerpts confirm the report of Colonel Strelets'kyi (See Digest 11/20/96) about the involvement of a third party, an employee of the National Reserve Bank, Boris Lavrov. According to the MK account, Lisovsky and Yevstafyev were stopped while attempting to leave the Kremlin with a box. When asked for a permit, they refused but the box was opened by the guards. When it was found to contain $500,000, the Main Protection Directorate was informed and Lisovsky and Yevstafyev were detained.
Colonel Streletsky from the MPD soon arrived at the checkpoint, and then he and two deputies proceeded to the office of the deputy Finance Minister German Kuznetsov. In Kuznetsov's office, they found Boris Lavrov, who was carrying $38,850. in an envelope. Lavrov claimed that he was just a courier, and that he had delivered the $500,000. to Lisovsky in Yevstafyev's presence. (He also claimed to have signed receipts). During questioning, Yevstafyev denied any knowledge of the box of money, claiming it was a plant by the security services. Lisovsky claimed the money was to be used to pay performers for the "Vote or Lose" campaign concerts.

MK speculates that the events represented an attempt by the Korzhakov-led hardliners to discredit Anatoli Chubais by catching his close associates engaging in illegal currency transactions. There have been numerous reports about Korzhakov's previous attempts to inform the president of illegal activities within the campaign staff; some Korzhakov associates have claimed that the president gave the MPD broad oversight of election financing just weeks before this incident. (I have however, been unable to find any documentary confirmation of this). In any event, it was Anatoli Chubais' spin on the events that won the President's ear in June. Whether Yeltsin will be swayed by the new information being published by MK and the eventual results of an investigation (and that will probably be a long time coming) or whether he will support the actions of his Chief of Staff will only be known once he returns to work in the Kremlin. It should be noted that Moscow Mayor Yuri Luzhkov is believed to have close ties with MK, and the continued coverage of an event embarrassing to Chubais might represent part of an ongoing power struggle between the two.

Investigation into document shredding

The Main Military Prosecutor's office has opened an investigation into the shredding of documents by the presidential security services following the dismissal of Aleksandr Korzhakov in June 1996. The investigation, initiated at the
request of Chief of Staff Anatoli Chubais, has thus far determined that some subdivisions of the Main Protection Directorate (with particular loyalty to Korzhakov) did shred documents on national security during the period from June - September 1996. While charges of abuses of power are expected to be filed, no names have been released in connection with the investigation. Although some sources in the Military Prosecutor's office claim (Ekho Moskvy, 25 November 96) that Korzhakov has been cleared in the investigation because the orders to dispose of documents were signed after his dismissal, deputy Chief of the Presidential Administration Yevgeni Savostyanov claims that MPD service staffers told him that they received verbal orders from Korzhakov to destroy the archives.

Severomorsk decree
On November 26, 1996 President Yel'tsin signed a decree turning Severomorsk into a closed administrative-territorial district. The area will be used as a secured zone for ship repair and as basing for the Northern Fleet.

Russian Federation: Foreign Relations
By Peter Lorenz

Settlement of tsarist debt to France
A longstanding obstacle in the relations between Russia and France finally has been cleared. Alain Juppe and Chernomyrdin reached an agreement whereby Russia will pay $400 million to some 400,000 investors who hold the tsarist bonds. Given this agreement Russia may be admitted to the Paris club of creditor states. (Reuters Tue, 26 Nov 1996 15:01:24 PST; and 14:01:14 PST)

Mixed messages on "NATO threat"
On Nov. 19, during his visit to England, Defense Minister Rodionov stated the NATO poses no threat to Russia. On the following day this statement was directly contradicted RF Ambassador Grinevskiy who argued NATO expansion
would substantially increase the nuclear threat in Europe. (Moscow NTV in Russian, 0300 GMT 20 Nov 96)

1st tier NATO candidates undistracted by Russian stance
While Russia's sometimes not entirely consistent anti-NATO campaign continues, Polish Prime Minister Cimoszewicz and Czech Ambassador Dobrovsky underline their desire to join the alliance despite Moscow's position. At the same time, Poland increases its cooperation with Russia in the economic sphere and in the area illegal immigration control. (Moscow TRUD in Russian, 16 Nov 96 p 4; Warsaw Polskie Radio First Program Network in Polish, 1800 GMT 14 Nov 96;)

PRC-RF strategic relationship
During his visit to China Primakov and his counterpart Qian Qichen praised the reduction of military forces along the Sino-Russian border and expressed their intention to sign and agreement in this issue area. The underlying theme of Primakov's visit was the emphasis of a "strategic relationship" between Moscow and Beijing in a "polycentric world structure." (Moscow ITAR-TASS in English, 1453 GMT 19 Nov 96; Moscow INTERFAX in English, 1707 GMT 20 Nov 96)

Primakov "offers" joint development of Kuriles
Foreign Minister Primakov officially proposed joint Japanese-Russian development of the South Kuriles while visiting Tokyo. Prime Minister Nakasone expressed his willingness to examine this proposal provided that the Japanese position in principle on the Kuriles remains unaffected. (Moscow ITAR-TASS World Service in Russian, 0425 GMT 15 Nov 96)

Russian spy in CIA arrested after release of Ex-KGB officer
Reminiscent of the Cold War Era Russo-American ties are dominated currently by issues of espionage. Almost immediately after American authorities released former KGB officer Galkin, who was arrested during his visit to the US, the FBI arrested CIA veteran Harold Nicholson on charges of spying for Russia. Galkin
was released after his former boss and current Foreign Minister Primakov personally took the matter into his hands. Reprisals against retired US intelligence specialists, currently in Russia on business unrelated to their former occupation, had been threatened. (United Press International Thu, 21 Nov 1996 16:01:48 PST; Moscow INTERFAX in English, 0854 GMT 14 Nov 96; Moscow NTV in Russian, 1100 GMT 19 Nov 96)

**Lebed's image enhancement tour to the US**

Lebed second trip to the West, after his recent visit to Brussels, brought him to the US. The purpose of his visit was to dispel "...the view that he is an anti-Semite, an ultra-nationalist...and a loose cannon." During his stay he met Deputy Secretary of State Talbot. President Clinton was on a trip to Asia during Lebed's visit. (United Press International Fri, 22 Nov 1996 17:00:43 PST)

**Declining migration from Near Abroad, stable number of Russians leaving Russia**

Compared to last year the number of Russians migrating from the Near Abroad to Russia has dropped by 50 per cent. The number of Russians wanting to leave their country remains stable at about 100,000 per year. The most popular destinations are the US, FRG, Israel, and Greece. (Moscow ROSSIYSKAYA GAZETA in Russian, 16 Nov 96 p 2)

**Comment**

The confidence with which Poland and the Czech Republic underline their intention to join NATO, suggests that the tough stance against alliance expansion taken by Yel'tsin, Rodionov and certainly Primakov has been recognized in Prague and Warsaw as a bargaining tactic to attain maximal concessions for "tolerating the western military machinery" at Russia's border (in Kaliningrad!).

Rodionov's "threat" perception expressed during his visit to the UK (NATO poses no threat to Russia) reflects the view underneath the official bargaining position.
Perhaps the Defense Minister's tongue slipped due to his enthusiasm over just having signed the first military cooperation agreement with a NATO country (Italy) and the prospect of a similar agreement with England.

**Russian Federation: Legislative Branch and Political Parties**

*By Michael Thurman*

**FEDERAL ASSEMBLY**

*The Duma adopted an appeal to stabilize the situation in the north Caucasus*

According to the 30 October appeal, the Russian Federation president should instruct the Russian Federation defense minister to carry out an inventory at arms and ammunition warehouses located in the North Caucasus and an inspection of the state of the records and the procedure by which arms and ammunition are received for storage and their safe keeping is monitored.

**On 2 November 1996 the Duma approved nominees to the National Bank Council**

The State Duma has approved six candidacies proposed by the Central Bank of Russia [CBR] for CBR the National Banking Council. They are Arnold Voylukov, CBR first deputy chairman; Yakov Dubenetskiy, chairman of Promstroybank; Sergey Yegorov, president of the Association of Russian Banks; Leonid Onushko, president of the "Kontinent" Bank in Naberezhnyye Chelny; and experts Oleg Lavrushin and Nikolay Pugin. This proposal by the Budget Committee was backed by 338 deputies.

**POLITICAL PARTIES**

*On 20 October Zyuganov voiced support for Yeltsin and governmental policies*
[If] one goes against the law, tomorrow there will be shooting...throughout the country. That is why we have demanded that there should be a normal government, and that no one, be it Lebed or Chubays, should interfere with the actions of the executive. This is why we backed [Lebed's dismissal].

Alleged CPRF document claims Lebed/Kulikov conflict is the result of conspiracy

On 4 November the Communist Party of the Russian Federation Duma faction distributed an "information memo." "According to information obtained from a number of independent sources and in the opinion of high-ranking MVD [Ministry of Internal Affairs] officials, the main purpose of hyping up the public conflict between A. Lebed and A. Kulikov is to disorganize MVD activities and discredit its head to such an extent as to justify starting yet another 'reform' of the MVD: taking investigative structures out of the MVD by resubordinating them to the RF General Procuracy or creating a separate Investigations Committee on their basis; taking the Internal Troops out of MVD structures and resubordinating them to the RF Ministry of Defense.

RF REGIONS

ELECTIONS

Tula residents do not favor Korzhakov in upcoming elections.

The Tula Center for Applied Sociology conducted a poll on local support in Tula for Aleksandr Korzhakov, former presidential security adviser, in the State Duma elections scheduled for February 1997. "In reply to the question: Are you prepared to support Aleksandr Korzhakov in the State Duma elections, 35.9 percent of those polled said no, and 22.4 percent said probably not.

Valeriy Ustyugov reelected chairman of the Kaliningrad Oblast Duma.

Altogether, two candidates were nominated for the chairman of the highest legislative body in the region --Valeriy Ustyugov and Yuriy Semenov. In his speeches at the first meeting of the second Oblast Duma, deputies expressed
the opinion that the personality of Valeriy Nikolayevich [Ustyugov] introduces stability and common sense.

Russian Federation: Armed Forces
By Lt. Col. Cathy Dreher and CDR John G. Steele

Airborne troops commander dismissed for violating ethics
Major General Vladimir Kazantsev, deputy commander of the Airborne troops was removed from his position for allegedly disagreeing with possible upcoming Airborne Troops reform during a news conference. It is unclear as to whether or not his removal was for the disagreement or because he publicly commented on it. Since the troops stand ready to make the reforms, it is probable that he was removed for his public comments. Apparently it is important for senior officials in Russia to support military reforms.

Korzhakov discharged from military service for slander
Yeltsin reported fired Korzhakov for making slanderous statements about Pres Yeltsin and his family as well as for disclosing information known to him in connection with his official duties. This action was prior to Mr Yeltsin's surgery. One can only wonder if it is linked.

Foreign Intelligence Service above internal power conflict
Actions are still underway to calm the waters after the Lebed problems. These disclaimers are reminiscent of the Stalinist era where no one trusted anyone else nor did they want to be associated with someone who wasn't still in favor.

Moscow regards South Korea as "serious" military partner
Russia for the first time will participate in the Seoul Air Show in Oct 1996. Earlier articles indicate sales of the SU aircraft to S. Korea are planned. This cooperative effort to demo their aircraft is yet another indicator of how desperate the Russians are to obtain hard currency. They apparently fear no negative
comments from N. Korea for this partnership activity. "Russia believes that both
North and South Korea have the right to strengthen their national defense as full-
fledged members of the International community."

**Rodionov signs defense accord with India**
The results of this accord will be an exchange of information on military issues,
conduct of joint war games, mutual visits by warships and training of officers at
each other's military academies. During the visit leading to this accord peace in
the region was discussed including Afghanistan and the need to ensure its
territorial integrity and end intervention into Afghanistan's internal affairs.

**Defense complex output falls by 75-80% over recent years**
Agreements with South Korea, China, and India re but examples of attempts to
increase demands for defense products. If the Russian budget is unable to
allocate sufficient monies outside partners and buyers must be found to support
production.

**Russia to introduce new weapon systems**
Despite financial problems and Defense Industry Restructuring, research and
development has continues in Russia in the areas of hydro acoustic engineering,
radas, and computer hardware. New weapon systems will be brought out such
as anti-aircraft missile systems, means for radio electronic war. Russia believes
they are far ahead of foreign developments in these areas. Obviously Russia
continues to look at development of technologies where they can capture a good
corner if not all of the market share.

**Rodionov has "carte blanche" for army reform**
Defense Minister Rodionov has won a hard fought battle for the right to reform
the military as he sees fit, based on reducing numerical size but ensuring
effective combat strength. He may be the charismatic leader sought to make
successful military reforms.
No serious progress reported in paying army's wage arrears
Articles continue that both deny the existence of a problem as well as those which allude to its rapid solution. Obviously, no real resolution is insight as we approach the date of the projected strikes.

Source of nuclear materials for terrorists
Nuclear submarine Komsomolets sank in April 1989 leaving 116 Kilograms of nuclear-grade uranium and two nuclear warheads with more than 6 kilos of plutonium-239 for the taking. 50 nuclear warheads lie near Bermuda, 10 near the Bay of Biscay and several near Hawaii. None of these sites is at a depth that is too difficult to reach - well within reach of someone with the money to pay for it. The Komsomolets has already been visited by an unknown party. Russia is seeking support and dollars to "render Harmless" all the submarines which have sunk. Russia has the technology and the expertise but not the money.

Russia recovers nukes
Belarus has finally turned over 18 SS-25 strategic nuclear missiles to Russia. Officially, this appears to account for all the "stray" Soviet strategic missiles held by the newly independent states.

One Russian voice on NATO expansion?
After weeks of mixed signals from Moscow on NATO expansion the attitude of the Russian leadership seems to have solidified (or their public pronouncements have finally been coordinated) indicating a solid front against NATO expansion, just prior to the Lisbon meeting of the OSCE.

Chemical weapons in Syria
Russian connections to Syria's chemical weapons program have been reported. Russia denies any involvement.
**Black Sea Fleet**

Ultimate disposition of the Black Sea Fleet and the port facilities in Sevastopol continue to negatively impact Russian-Ukrainian relations. Recent apparent progress proved illusory. Russia is saying now that not only must Sevastapol remain part of Russia, but that the Ukrainian Fleet may not be based there at all.

**New attack helo**

Russia unveiled a new attack helicopter, the KA-52 "Alligator." This helo is a two seat variant of the KA-50, which has not found a ready market to date in either Russia or abroad.

**Paychecks still late**

Most units in the Russian military are still not being paid regularly. Dire warnings of mutiny and other extralegal actions continue to surface, though the Defense Minister has softened his rhetoric on this particular issue. The lack of reaction to these pronouncements (i.e. that the second largest nuclear military power on earth is in danger of collapse) in either Russia or the West is nothing short of astounding.

**Last Russian troops out of Chechnya**

The last two brigades of Russian troops have left Chechnya. Earlier threats from the DUMA to impeach Yeltsin over this issue have come to nothing. Public opinion seems overwhelming (70+ percent) in support of the pullout, even when the question of the withdrawal explicitly acknowledges that Russia may permanently lose the territory as a result.

**Ukraine to join NATO?**

Ukraine has indicated it may wish to ultimately join NATO. The expressed possibility may be much more related to Ukrainian - Russian relations than Ukrainian relations with western Europe.
Russian advisors to Ukraine

70 Russian military advisors led by a general officer have been assigned to the Tajik military. The reports indicate the head of the group will have "direct access" to the Tajik president and prime minister. That kind of access is extraordinary for the head of a military advisor group, as is the assignment of a general officer over a group of 70 individuals.

General fired

The head of the Russian ground forces, General Vladimir Semenov, was summarily fired for "actions that discredit the honor and dignity of a serviceman." Speculation has it that it may be the activities of his wife (who works for a helicopter manufacturer) that precipitated the firing.

Newly Independent States: Western Region

By Chandler Rosenberger

BELARUS

CONSTITUTION

Voters support Lukashenka's constitution

President Alyaksandr Lukashenka's draft constitution, which greatly increases his powers, won 70.5% of the vote in a referendum held Sunday, November 24. In other questions, 88.5% of respondents voted in favor of changing the national holiday from 17 July, when the republic declared independence, to 3 July, when the Red Army liberated Minsk from the Germans. Lukashenka's other two questions--on banning the free sale and purchase of land and on retaining the death penalty--also passed by a wide margin.

Neither of the parliament's two questions passed. Only 29.9% voted for electing local administrations by direct popular vote and only 32.1% were in favor of funding all state agencies directly from the budget. Voting among the KGB and military was particularly high, with 99.6% casting ballots. Former head of the
Central Electoral Commission Viktar Hanchar said the results were forged, and independent observers claimed irregularities in voting procedures.

On 26 November Lukashenka set up a new parliament, international agencies reported. Between 102 and 112 deputies met with Lukashenka and declared themselves the new lower house of the legislature. Under the new constitution, the lower house must have 110 members from the current 199-strong parliament. There will also be an upper house made up partly of the president's appointees.

DOMESTIC AFFAIRS

Demonstrators clash with police in Minsk

Between 5,000 and 10,000 people took part in a "March of Silence" in Minsk on 17 November to protest President Alyaksandr Lukashenka's proposals to increase his powers, Reuters reported. Ten people were arrested and some 20 were slightly injured. The demonstrators, carrying red and white Belarusian flags, marched on the parliament building where deputies were scheduled to hold an emergency session on the political situation in the republic.

MEDIA

Media restrictions in Belarus

President Lukashenka on 19 November issued a decree cutting off Russian Public TV and NTV's communication lines to Belarus, Russian media reported on 19 November. The restrictions, however, were lifted later that day. Lukashenka had claimed the move was justified because the Russian channels were unobjective and provocative in their reporting on Belarus. Under the decree, Russian reports on Belarus could be sent to Russia only after Belarusian media authorities had checked and approved them.

RF RELATIONS

Russian-backed Belarus deal collapses
A Russian-brokered deal to end the political standoff in Belarus collapsed Friday, November 22, as Parliament failed to approve the compromise and President Alexander Lukashenko indicated he would no longer seek a solution to the crisis.

MILITARY

Last Belarus nuclear missiles gone
Belarus sent the last of its former Soviet nuclear missiles to Russia on Tuesday, November 27. On Friday, November 22, Belarus officials, including a top presidential aide, said the last missiles had left the republic's territory -- several weeks ahead of a year-end deadline set as part of a deal that gave Russia control of the ex-Soviet nuclear arsenal.

Comment
Lukashenka has won this round with the opposition. He cleverly avoided a physical confrontation with the parliament and instead let his lackeys in the administration skew the vote for him. He has quickly moved to dissolve parliament, the one platform the opposition had.

UKRAINE

CHERNOBYL

Ukraine may restart a Chornobyl reactor
Ukrainian nuclear authorities prepared plans to restart Chornobyl reactor No. 2, which was shut down in 1991 after a fire incident, international media reported on 14 November. Valerii Idelson, spokesman for Chornobyl, told Reuters that technical documents have been sent for approval to the Ukrainian government. Chornobyl reactors 1 and 3 still function and contribute 5% of Ukraine's electricity.

CRIMEA

Ukraine in uproar over draft law on Sevastopol
Leaders of all caucuses in the Ukrainian parliament have signed a statement condemning a draft law on the withdrawal of Ukrainian military from Sevastopol, UNIAN reported on 15 November. The bill was proposed by Ivan Symonenko of the Soyuz caucus, who demanded that the Ukrainian "occupational forces" pull out from Sevastopol by 1 July 1997. Symonenko described Crimea as a Ukrainian colony and Sevastopol as a temporarily occupied city. The Rukh caucus has demanded that Symonenko be stripped of his parliamentary immunity and prosecuted. It also called for the dismissal of parliamentary speaker Oleksander Moroz and his first deputy, Oleksander Tkachenko, for "turning a blind eye to the anti-state activities of some deputies."

**ECONOMY**

**Ukrainian President, Premier take hard line on budget**

Leonid Kuchma and Pavlo Lazarenko have told representatives of some caucuses that they will fight any attempts by lawmakers to increase social spending and the 1997 budget deficit, Ukrainian agencies reported on 21 November. Lazarenko said the government has prepared a package of amendments to the draft 1997 budget that provides for further reductions in social benefits, the laying-off of civil servants, and tax cuts for Ukrainian industry. Meanwhile, Ukrainian National Bank Director Viktor Yushchenko has said the devaluation of the national currency has ended, Ukrainian TV reported on 19 November. He noted that the bank will intervene to support the exchange rate against the dollar because if the hryvnya falls below 1.9 to $1, inflation will soar.

Parliament seemed to be heading in the opposite direction. Lawmakers on 22 November voted to suspend the privatization of 208 state-owned enterprises deemed "strategically important" until laws governing investments in such businesses are adopted, UNIAN reported on 22 November. They also decided to investigate how the State Property Fund has so far conducted the privatization of such companies and to increase the number of state-owned enterprises barred from privatization from 1,475 to 7,111.
Comment
Ukraine is headed into a long winter of struggle over the president's austerity program, a tussle that will threaten the newly-established currency.

MOLDOVA
DNIESTR
Reactions to Russian Resolution on Dniester
A Russian State Duma resolution proposing that the government declare the Dniester region a zone of special strategic interests for Russia has provoked a sharp reaction in Chisinau, Moldovan media reported on 14 November. The resolution, adopted a day earlier, was dismissed by Moldova's Deputy Foreign Minister Vasile Sova as interference in his country's internal affairs.

FOREIGN RELATIONS
Moldova on backburner for westward-looking Romania
Romania will keep a close eye on neighbouring Moldova, but ties with ethnic kin there are on the backburner as Bucharest looks west towards NATO and the European Union. The foreign policy priorities of centrist Emil Constantinescu, who was sworn in as Romanian president on Friday, look in the opposite direction from the former Soviet republic.

ELECTIONS
Incumbent beaten in Moldovan election
Moldovan Parliament speaker Petru Lucinschi defeated incumbent Mircea Snegur in a close presidential runoff vote whose result Monday signaled warmer relations between the former Soviet republic and Russia. A preliminary count of ballots from all districts in the nation of 4.4 million indicated the moderate Lucinschi won just over 54 percent of the vote in the two-man contest Sunday, while the reformist took 45.9 percent, election officials said.
Snegur and Lucinschi squared off in a runoff election after a first round vote held Nov. 17. In the first round, Snegur had 38.7 percent, well ahead of the more moderate Lucinschi at 27.3 percent but far shy of the clear majority needed to win outright.

**Comment**

Moscow will be happy with Luchinschi’s electoral victory. At a meeting with foreign election observers in February 1994, Luchinschi suggested that he should speak to the crowd in Russian rather than Romanian. (He was shouted down). Apparently not even the Russian Duma’s stroppiness over its military bases in Dniestr could spook the Moldovan electorate.

Newly Independent States: Central Asia

By Monika Shepard

**KYRGYZSTAN**

**Kyrgyzstan to participate in Eurasian transport corridor project**

Kyrgyzstan is ready to join a transport treaty already established between Georgia, Azerbaijan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan for the purpose of building a transport artery through the Southern Caucasus. It is expected that Kyrgyzstan will be signing the treaty in the near future, following an exchange of visits by Presidents Akayev and Shevardnadze.

**Akayev downsizes civil service staff**

In an effort to reduce the budget and increase government efficiency, President Akayev has decreed that the presidential administrative staff and the parliamentary administrative staff should be cut by 30%. In addition, the staffs of the ministries, government departments and their territorial subdivisions should be reduced by 20%, and the staff of local executive bodies is to be decreased by 10%.
Akayev signs decree regulating religious organizations
President Akayev has signed a decree requiring all religious organizations and associations to register with the state commission on religious affairs. This decree is to remain in effect until the end of 1996, when the Kyrgyz parliament is expected to adopt a law on religion.

Kyrgyzstan to receive $466 million in foreign aid
Kyrgyzstan is to receive $466 million in foreign donations in 1997. The United States will donate $49 million ($30 million is to be used to strengthen the Kyrgyz currency), and Japan and France are also major donors, and Russia has offered Kyrgyzstan a 40-year repayment plan for its $132 million debt to Russia.

Akayev reviews economic progress for 1996
In the first 10 mos. of 1996, Kyrgyzstan's GDP has risen 7.3% and real incomes rose 0.8% (after dropping in the previous 2 yrs.). Inflation has fallen to 21.1%, consumer goods production rose 20%, and the output of food items rose 27%. The budget deficit currently stands at 6.6% of GDP, and unemployment is still rising. Tax evasion and black market activities still pose significant problems, depriving the national treasury of 25-30% in taxes due, and the black market has grown to equal 15% of GDP. Bureaucratic corruption is still rampant, prompting President Akayev's recent cuts in civil service employment.

Kyrgyz parliament elects new speaker
On 12 November, the Kyrgyz Constitutional Court declared Mukar Cholponbayev's election to the office of speaker of the Kyrgyz Legislative Chamber to be illegitimate, due to his election by less than a majority of the Chamber's members. Following this decision, the Legislative Chamber elected a new speaker, Usup Mukambayev, on 15 November.

TAJIKISTAN
Tajik president And Moscow mayor discuss cooperation
President Rakhmanov and Mayor Luzhkov met in Moscow on 18 November to discuss developing direct economic ties, specifically in the textile industry. Moscow textile mills are to begin processing shipments of Tajik cotton. The two men also discussed the situation of the 160,000 Tajik refugees who have settled in Moscow, and Mayor Luzhkov agreed to appoint a special commission to address the refugees' problems.

Rakhmanov dissatisfied with progress of Russian-Tajik accords
President Rakhmanov met with Yevgenii Belov, the new Russian ambassador to Tajikistan, on 22 November and informed him of his dissatisfaction with all aspects of the Tajik-Russian accords, especially in regard to economic cooperation. Rakhmanov called on Russia to increase its economic cooperation with all of the Central Asian states. He also stated that he would like to increase Tajikistan's political cooperation with Russia, since Russia is the only country which can guarantee peace and stability in the region. Comment: Rakhmanov's government is already heavily dependent on Russian support for its continued existence, so it is difficult to determine exactly how the current Tajik government could achieve even greater political cooperation with Moscow than presently exists. Furthermore, far from guaranteeing peace and stability in Tajikistan, Russian troops have been involved in Tajikistan's civil war from its outset, and may well have contributed to prolonging it.

Discussions of further Tajik peace talks continue
Both the leader of the United Tajik Opposition, Sayed Abdullo Nuri, and President Rakhmanov have repeatedly declared their readiness to hold long-awaited peace talks in Moscow, but so far, neither side has actually suggested a date. President Rakhmanov wrote an open letter to Nuri, published on 11 November, in which declared his willingness to continue the negotiations. Nuri, for his part, sent a letter to Gerd Merrem, the UN special envoy to Tajikistan, in which he suggested that a round of negotiations be held prior to the Moscow
meeting, in order to "reconsider the main political issues" and to prepare any necessary documents.

**United Tajik opposition to join with secular opposition group**
Following a series of talks between first deputy opposition leader, Haji Akbar Turajonzoda and Abdumalik Abdullajonov, leader of the National Revival Bloc held in Tashkent, the two groups have agreed to join forces, and Abdullajonov is to participate in any further peace negotiations with the Tajik government.

Abdullajonov is a wealthy and powerful politician who participated in the last presidential election. The National Revival Bloc is a secular opposition group, which was previously in competition with the United Tajik Opposition (which is composed of at least 3 different groups itself).

**Tajik opposition captures Komsomolabad peacefully**
The district of Komsomolabad, located 160 km from Dushanbe, was captured by the Tajik opposition forces in what appears to have been an entirely peaceful takeover on 17 November. Local government militia and Security Ministry personnel were disarmed and released, after being held prisoner for a few days.

Opposition leader Haji Akbar Turajonzoda claims that rebel forces are capable of taking over Dushanbe at any time, but have temporarily halted their military operations because they want to avoid further civilian casualties. Apparently the opposition forces are also waiting for orders from their headquarters in Taloqan, Afghanistan.

**Comment**
It is unclear whether Mr. Turajonzoda's confidence that the opposition is strong enough to take over the capital is shared by the rest of the opposition leaders, but if it is, this would explain Mr. Nuri's reluctance to set a date for the next round of peace negotiations.

**Rakhmanov attends FAO summit in Rome**
President Rakhmanov arrived in Rome on 14 November to attend the UN Food and Agricultural Organization summit, where he was to present a report on the state of agricultural production in Tajikistan. He intended to ask the FAO to provide Tajikistan with agricultural equipment until the country is able to overcome its current economic crisis. He was also planning to suggest that the FAO set up a special fund for the purpose of providing food subsidies to heavily indebted states which have severe balance of payments problems.

**Central Asian countries to donate $185 million to Tajikistan**

During a 3-day meeting convened in Tokyo on 30 October and organized by the World Bank and the Japanese Foreign Ministry, the Central Asian states decided to donate economic aid worth $185 million to Tajikistan in 1997. The funds are to be used for budget recovery, humanitarian aid, and technical credits, according to a program designed in conjunction with the IMF and the World Bank. Projects to be financed by the Central Asian states' donations are the construction of international airports in Dushanbe, Khodzhent, and Kulyab, as well as for the construction and repair of highways and railways. The Japanese Cabinet of Ministers is considering granting Tajikistan considerable economic aid and Russia has agreed to restructure Tajikistan's $300 million debt.

**Tajik army resorts to press-ganging**

According to a 4 November report on the Dushanbe Radio Tajikistan Network, the Tajik army has had to resort to press-ganging in order to implement the fall 1996 call-up and force men who have recently reached draft age to fulfill their required military service.

**TURKMENISTAN**

**Russian-Turkmen citizenship treaty ratified**

The upper house of the Russian parliament recently ratified a treaty describing the rights and obligations of Russian citizens permanently living in Turkmenistan and Turkmen citizens living permanently living in Russia. The treaty states that
they are to enjoy all the same rights as the citizens of their country of residence with the exception of: the right to vote and the right to run for elected office. They are also prohibited from holding top posts in the diplomatic and security services of their country of residence, nor may they occupy the posts of judge or prosecutor.

**Foreign Ministry denies arms transported to Afghanistan**
The Turkmen Foreign Ministry’s press service released a statement on 22 November reaffirming Turkmenistan's status as a neutral territory and denying that even a single shipment of military cargo bound for Afghanistan has crossed Turkmen territory on the grounds that such action is prohibited by the Turkmen constitution. This statement was in response to reports in the Russian press that the Taleban have received arms shipments via Turkmenistan.

**Niyazov in Turkey**
President Niyazov recently (14 November) traveled to Turkey for a 3-day medical check-up at the Istanbul Medical Centre. Following his hospital stay, he met with President Suleyman Demirel to discuss the progress of previously signed accords, as well as signing further agreements on cooperation in education and environmental protection.

**Newly Independent States: Caucasus**
By Miriam Lansky

**Interim agreement signed November 23**
Prime Minister Chernomyrdin of Russia and Prime Minister Maskhadov of Chechnya signed a document to regulate relations between them until the results of the Chechen presidential and parliamentary elections are announced on January 28. The agreement was developed in Nazran by Sergei Stepashin and Emil Pain in consultation with Movladi Udugov, Akhmed Zakeyev and the Ingush
President Ayushev. (For a full text of the agreement see TASS, November 23, 1996)

Among other provisions the agreement stipulates that:

- After the elections an agreement on economic relations will be concluded. Until then, the legislation of the Chechen Republic and of the Russian Federation will apply.
- To promote movement of people and freight, the civil airport, railways and roads will resume functioning by December 1, by which time a custom procedure will be in place.
- By December 1, a separate agreement regarding the production, processing and transportation of oil and oil products will be concluded. The Chechen side guarantees the safety of the oil pipeline passing through Chechnya.
- The sides recognize a need to coordinate actions in the defense sphere and agree not to take actions that threaten their security.

No Russian forces to remain in Chechnya

In accordance with a separate Presidential edict the remaining divisions of the Interior Ministry and the Defense Ministry are on their way out. Their departure completes the withdrawal of Russian forces from the republic. This announcement goes a long way to explain the sudden resignation and hasty withdrawal to Moscow of the Russian installed Zavgaev government. The Zavgaev government, though totally irrelevant, had presided over office space in Severny airport, which will no longer to be occupied by Russian troops.

The Candidates so far...

Despite the lack of preparedness for the elections candidates are already emerging. The current president Zemlikan Yanderbayev has stated that he expects to run unopposed. He will not get his wish since Shamil Basayev, the
field commander who led the raid against Buddenovsk, is running against him on a anti-corruption campaign. The Confederation of the Peoples of the Caucasus has nominated Yusup Soslambekov, who may well emerge as Moscow’s pick for the presidency. The group’s previous accomplishments include funneling mercenaries and arms to the Abkhaz in 1993 and maintaining complete silence and indifference for the entire duration of the Chechen war.

Comment
Perhaps the most important of the provisions in the interim agreement are the two pertaining to oil. It is believed that the separate agreement on oil transit will provide for Chechnya receiving part of the transit fee and a joint Russian-Chechen patrol of the pipeline will be put into effect. Of greater consequence than the transit fees is the power to stop the flow of oil for political purposes, among other case, the USSR found this a useful tool against the Lithuania and Russia used it against Ukraine.

The Chechen guarantee of the pipeline security is perhaps the best indication of just how little Russia has accomplished in its ill conceived invasion and how close Ichkeria may be coming to gaining independence. Azerbaijan and the Caspian Sea Consortium demanded Russian guarantees of pipeline security before early oil could be shipped via the "northern route." Secretary of the Security Council, Ivan Rybkin and his deputy Boris Berezovsky promptly flew to Narzan in the first half of November to receive such assurances from the Chechen leadership. This chain of events, together with the complete Russian military withdrawal, suggests that Russian jurisdiction over Chechnya is little more than a legal formality. It is more than ironic that Russia today depends on the same individuals to safeguard its pipeline that it has devoted two years to unseating.

ARMENIA

Constitutional Court rejects suit over election results
On November 21, (ten days after the inauguration of president Petrosyan), the Constitutional court upheld the results of the presidential elections and rejected opposition claims of electoral fraud. A presidential spokesman dismissed OSCE, European Parliament, and IFES findings of improper procedure as having been based on "doubtful data."

AZERBAIJAN
Berezovsky visits
Russian Security Council Deputy Secretary Boris Berezovsky visited Baku on November 18 to assure the Azeri President that the northern oil pipeline route is secure. The construction of the pipeline was due to be completed this month, and oil transit is to begin in August 1997.

NKA0
From Budapest to Lisbon
The president of the OSCE parliamentary assembly, Havyer Rupers, told reporters that the "puppet presidential elections" in Nagorno-Karabakh can not be deemed fair since a large part of the population are refugees who could not vote. He also said that the matter would be brought up at the Lisbon summit of the OSCE. The Budapest summit of 1994 held out the possibility of stationing OSCE observers in Nagorno-Karabkh if the sides could come to a political agreement. To this day despite numerous meetings and initiatives no agreement seems forthcoming.

GEORGIA
Elections held in Abkhazia and South Ossetia
Presidential elections in South Ossetia and parliamentary elections in Abkhazia were held despite statements from the OSCE and the CIS stating that the results would not legitimize their governments. South Ossetia concluded a friendship and cooperation treaty with North Ossetia on the eve of the balloting. Lyudvig Chiribov, who is seen as the candidate most likely to negotiate a status within
Georgia won in South Ossetia. In Abkhazia on the eve of the balloting tensions rose as the government in exile summoned 1000 former guards to the Zugdidi district, which borders Abkhazia, the commander of the Russian peacekeepers General Yakushev called for new security measures in the Gali district.

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