Russian Federation: Executive Branch

By Susan Cavan

PRESIDENCY

Personnel rumors

Reports are surfacing that some former influential Kremlin personnel will once again appear in the government or presidential administrations. Sergei Shakhrai, currently the president's representative to the Constitutional Court, and Vladimir Shumeiko are reported to be expecting governmental posts and the responsibility for redefining the relationship between the regions and the federal center.

(Delovoy mir, 14 Oct 97; FBIS-SOV-97-300)

There are also an abundance of reports that the controversial former FSB Chief Mikhail Barsukov will soon receive an appointment to head up a special projects department within the Presidential Administration. (Kommersant Daily, 17 Oct 97; NEXIS) This department, formerly the KGB 15th Directorate, is responsible for the oversight of underground special and communications facilities.

(Komsomolskaya pravda, 25 Oct 97; NEXIS)

In other personnel news, it appears that Lt. Gen. Viktor Zavarzin will be appointed as Russia's military envoy to NATO, a position believed coveted by former Defense Minister Pavel Grachev. (Interfax, 20 Oct 97, FBIS-SOV-97-293) Zavarzin served previously as the commander of CIS Joint Peacekeeping Forces on Tajikistan.

SECURITY COUNCIL

Council restructuring, restaffing approved
The Security Council has undergone a thorough restructuring of its network of interdepartmental commissions as well as a personnel shuffle that reflects the changes made to the government and presidential apparat in the course of the past year and a half. Several chairmen who had been in their positions since the creation of their commissions, such as Ecological Security Chief Yablokov, have been removed to make room for new or more prominent government figures. Among the new chairmen are Foreign Minister Yevgeni Primakov in a new Commission on International Security; Justice Minister Sergei Stepashin heads up a new Commission on Constitutional Security; and NDR Duma Deputy Aleksandr Shokhin at the Commission for Economic Security. In addition to the newly-created commissions mentioned above, there are two other new commissions: one on the protection of the rights of citizens, public safety, crime and corruption to be headed by General Prosecutor Yuri Skuratov; and a commission on problems of the Defense Industry, chaired by Deputy Prime Minister Yakov Urinson. (Presidential Edict No. 1024, dated 10 July 96, in Rossiyskaya gazeta, 2 Oct 97; FBIS-SOV-97-289)

In other Security Council news, it appears that issues of military reform will now be coordinated jointly by the Security Council and the Defense Council. SC Secretary Ivan Rybkin and DC Secretary Andrei Kokoshin met and agreed recently to cooperate on military reform, particularly the economic aspects. (Rossiyskiye vesti, 22 Oct 97; FBIS-SOV-97-295)

**GOVERNMENT**

**Abdulatipov’s responsibilities increased**

Ramazan Abdulatipov, the government liaison for Chechnya, has recently had his portfolio expanded to include responsibilities in other regional relations. Abdulatipov will now head the government commission tasked with ensuring delivery of goods to the Far North, the Commission for State Support of the Development of Russia’s Regions, the Consultative Council for the Affairs of National-Cultural Autonomies and the council responsible for the demarcation of
areas of jurisdiction between the federal authorities and the Republic of Sakha (Yakutia). (Rossiyskiye vesti, 17 Oct 97; FBIS-SOV-97-290) It appears that despite his clashes with SC Secretary Rybkin, Abdulatipov retains the confidence of the prime minister in negotiating regional affairs.

Chernomyrdin hints at Duma dissolution background
In an interview with Yevgeni Kiselev from Itogi (NTV, 19 Oct 97; FBIS-SOV-97-302), Prime Minister Viktor Chernomyrdin distanced himself from the "young people and the not-so-young, the reformers" in the government who wanted "to encourage the Duma to act, so that they can work later with another Duma, ... one that is more loyal to the government...." His statements provide further evidence that there was at least a faction within the government hoping to provoke the Duma into no-confidence votes, thereby triggering the president's constitutional means of dissolving the Duma.

Chernomyrdin also revealed more of his political sympathies than has been evident since the ascendence of the Chubais and Nemtsov reform teams. As has long been speculated, Chernomyrdin may be more comfortable negotiating with the Communists than with liberal reformers. In regard to the recent conflict between the Duma and government, Chernomyrdin remarked "I will never agree with Yavlinsky's position and others and so on. I can work with Seleznev."

Justice Minister Stepashin to head joint commission on extremism
Sergei Stepashin has been named "Coordinator" of a new presidential commission tasked with developing "measures to prevent and stop political extremism aimed at changing the foundations of the constitutional system by force and violating the integrity of the Russian Federation, undermining the security of the state, and kindling social, racial, ethnic and religious strife." (Presidential Decree No. 1143, 27 Oct 97; NEXIS) Joining Stepashin on the commission are MVD Chief Kulikov, FSB Head Kovalev, members of the
As tensions mount, Russia abstains on new UN sanctions against Iraq
As the United States threatened military strikes to protect its efforts to inspect Iraq's weapons production, Russia abstained from UN Security Council votes on tough new UN sanctions against Baghdad.

Russia was joined in abstaining by China, France, Egypt and Kenya. The resulting 10-0 vote meant the sanctions, which ban travel abroad by selected Iraqi officials, passed by the narrowest possible margin. (Interfax, 1552 GMT, 24 Oct 97; FBIS-SOV-97-297)

Analyzing international business deals with Baghdad, the newspaper Rossiyskaya gazeta concluded that Russian oil firms are "now ahead of their competitors in reestablishing ties to Iraq." A Russian consortium has, for example, concluded a $3.8 billion contract to develop the Western Qurnah oil field.

"The Russian oil companies' activity in the Iraqi market supported at a state level indicates that Russia has probably started to meld the geopolitical aspirations of the state and the commercial interests of major companies in the Persian Gulf Region," the paper concluded. (Rossiyskaya gazeta, 22 Oct 97; FBIS-SOV-97-297)
Touring five nations of the Middle East and the Palestinian "self-rule" territories, Russian Foreign Minister Yevgeni Primakov promised to strengthen Moscow's position as a "co-sponsor" of the region's peace negotiations. In a dramatic turn of shuttle diplomacy, Primakov acted as a liaison between the Syrian and Israeli governments, and appeared to have secured his role as a major player in the region.

The highlight of Primakov's tour was an impromptu turn as go-between from Damascus to Tel Aviv. Although shrouded in secrecy, it appears that Primakov brought to Israel a message from Syrian President Hafiz al-Asad, in which Asad made an overture to open new negotiations on the status of the Golan Heights.

At a press conference following his meetings with Asad, Primakov hinted that he had attempted to open the "Syrian-Israel" track of the Madrid accords. "There are people who think that one can proceed along only one track, for example the Palestinian one," Primakov said. "But if the Syrian track is blocked, the whole peace process in the region will be stopped." (ITAR-TASS, 1458 GMT, 26 Oct 97; FBIS-SOV-97-299)

After finishing subsequent meetings with Israeli Foreign Minister David Levy, Primakov said Levy had asked him to return to Damascus, rather than continue on to Jordan, in order to convey a message to Asad from the Israeli government. Israel reportedly wanted to express an interest in re-opening peace talks with Syria, in exchange for a Syrian promise to curb attacks on Israel launched from southern Lebanon by the Iranian-backed terrorist group Hezbollah. (ITAR-TASS, 1706 GMT, 27 Oct 97; FBIS-SOV-97-300)

**Russia to help Libya overhaul nuclear research center, other projects**

Russia has agreed to allow scientists to consult with their Libyan counterparts on the overhaul of the Gazhura (name as received) Nuclear Research Center, as
well as other civil engineering projects, according to Sergei Shoygu, Russia's Minister for Emergency Situations.

Tripoli and Moscow will establish a joint investment company and bank to finance the projects, and hope to settle Libya's $2.4 billion debt, which Russia inherited from the former Soviet Union. (Interfax, 1100 GMT, 22 Oct 97; FBIS-SOV-97-295)

**Russia lobbies Austria, Hungary not to join NATO...**

On a state visit to Vienna, Russian Prime Minister Viktor Chernomyrdin praised Austrian neutrality as a model for future European relations, and implored Austrian President Viktor Klima not to seek NATO membership.

"Russia favors the Austrian stance" on European security issues, Chernomyrdin said. "Ever since the end of World War Two Austria has been a neutral country and it has only gained by this," he said. The body most likely to emulate the Austrian stance, Chernomyrdin said, was the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE).

Russia intends to cooperate actively with NATO on the consolidation of the European security, Chernomyrdin said, but "we will never agree that the expansion of NATO is needed now, since its doctrine of confrontation with the Warsaw Pact, the Soviet Union and, consequently, Russia has not essentially changed," he said. (Interfax, 1628 GMT, 29 Oct 97; FBIS-SOV-97-302)

Foreign Ministry spokesman Valeri Nesterushkin also praised alternatives to NATO expansion as a future basis for European security. He praised the Hungarian organization "A Public Coalition for a Policy in the Name of Man" for asking the Russian leadership to declare that it would guarantee Hungary's neutrality if that country does not join NATO. (Interfax, 1343 GMT, 28 Oct 97; FBIS-SOV-97-301)
...while Duma leaders complain to President Clinton
The chairmen of Duma committees on October 16th sent an open letter to US President Bill Clinton agreeing with American pundits who opposed NATO expansion.

The process of expanding the alliance eastward "will indeed weaken the entire international security system and undermine strategic stability," the letter stated. "Mr. President, it is evident from the above-mentioned appeal that your compatriots are reasonably asking questions about the aims, possible consequences, and price of the alliance's planned eastward expansion."

The good faith of the letter's signatories was bright into question, however, by a number of questionable historical judgments. Not only, the signatories affirmed, did Russia pose no threat to the West since the end of the Cold War; the authors insisted that "it did not pose one previously either." The "new and truly artificial line" to be drawn in Europe as a result of NATO expansion was, the signatories believed, particularly unjust, since the preceding line of the Iron Curtain "was fairly established on the basis of the results of World War II, in which the Soviet Union is well known to have played a decisive liberating role." (Sovetskaya Rossiya, 16 Oct 97; Johnson's Russia List #1304).

Russia to provide India with weapons technology, support bid for UN seat
Relations between India and Russia continue to improve. In Moscow, Indian Defense Minister Mulayam Singh secured pledges of long-term cooperation in the modernization of weapons based on Russian technology, as well as Indo-Russian cooperation in the development of new systems. At the talks, Russian President Boris Yel'tsin also promised to prevent future arms sales to Pakistan. (The Pioneer, 22 Oct 97; FBIS-NES-97-296)
The Russian ambassador to New Delhi also promised Moscow's support for India's bid to gain a seat on the Security Council of the United Nations. The pledge came as Russian Deputy Prime Minister Anatoli Kulikov was in India to discuss cooperation in fighting drug trafficking. (Deccan Herald (Internet version), 17 Oct 97; FBIS-NES-97-290)

**Russia and China to finish drawing border before Yel'tsin visits Beijing**

Moscow and Beijing plan to complete the demarcation of their 2,580-mile border in the run-up to the Russian president's scheduled visit to China over November 9-11.

Work on establishing the border, ongoing since 1992, is complete but for agreement on two strips of land near Vladivostock. Although some regional leaders in Russia believe these areas have been transferred to China at the expense of Russian security, spokesmen in Moscow said the government would ignore such complaints.

Agreement of the border is a critical step in the improvement of Sino-Russian relations, and helps to secure the "strategic partnership" pronounced during the visit of Chinese president Jiang Zemin to Moscow in April. (Reuters, 21 Oct 97; Johnson's Russia List #1304)

**Comment**

**Primakov's Mid-east maneuvers**

By attempting to re-open the "Syrian-Israeli" track of the Middle East peace process, Russian Foreign Minister Yevgeni Primakov has tried to score a major diplomatic victory. As the point man between Damascus and Tel Aviv, Primakov now would have had a monopoly on an aspect of Arab-Israeli negotiations concerning which the White House has not, so far, been successful.
One must admire Primakov's strategy. He tried to secure this roost for Moscow due to his government's ties to Iran, the backers of the Syrian-based Hezbollah, which has harrassed Israel from the north. By securing a friendship with Iran, then traveling to Syria, Primakov has positioned himself as patron of both the government that backs Hezbollah and the government that offers it a home.

This is not to say that Primkov is acting in the best interests of peace. Re-opening the Syrian-Israeli track of negotiations wouldn't guarantee a just settlement. It is, however, a means by which Russia can counter America's attempts to build an alliance between Turkey and Israel, and thus can put Russia right back at the heart of Middle East talks. The only good news is that the Iranian-Syrian "track" is hardly compatible with Primakov's ardent support of Iraq, Iran's and Syria's adversary.

Russian Federation: Domestic Issues and Legislative Branch
By Michael Thurman

REGIONS
Communist Duma candidate wins in Stavropol district
Elections in the Stavropol region for State Duma deputies for the Georgiyevsky Electoral District resulted in victory for Communist candidate Ivan Meshcherin. The local popularity of Zyuganov meant that the election results surprised no one. According to the leaders of the CPRF kray committee, one-third of all the kray organization Communists live in Georgiyevsky District and the Communists pulled out all the stops in campaigning for their candidate. But the strong support Meshcherin received in the rural districts may have had less to do with political ideology than it did with Meshcherin's position as director of the Pravokumskoye Agricultural Enterprise. According to Rossiyskaya gazeta, Meshcherin is
recognized by the region's voters as being an effective business manager and thus well-qualified for the job of Duma deputy.

Meshcherin received 43.9 percent of the vote. Colonel Nikolai Lyashenko, the former Budennovsk police chief, came in second. Lyashenko represented the Congress of Russian Communities. Turnout was less than 31 percent (Rossiyskaya gazeta, 16 Sep 97; FBIS-SOV-97-259).

**Yel'tsin supports importance of local government**
At a session of the Council for Local Government, which the president chairs, Yel'tsin pointed to the need for financial stability within the regions. He said that "consolidation" of local government does not pose a threat to the federal structure of Russia. This is in opposition to the remarks made State Duma Chairman Gennadi Seleznev, who believes that the region's governors were given too much power, and that, as a result, Russia may be turned into a confederation.

Yel'tsin's position is in keeping with his continuing courtship of the regions. By supporting the regional and local government at the possible expense of the center, Yel'tsin may be realizing that elections are won outside of the Beltway -- or rather Sadovoye Ring Road, (ITAR-TASS, 0954 GMT, 30 Sep 97; FBIS-SOV-97-273)

**MEDIA**
**All-Russian TV and radio chairman Nikolai Svanidze interview**
Svanidze pointed out that conflicts between private and public broadcasting stations are resolved privately and away from the legal system due to an "unwritten" agreement. No explanation was given as to what this agreement might mean. However Svanidze was quite frank when he confirmed that "[e]verybody knows that NTV is controlled by Vladimir Gusinskiy and ORT [Russian Public Television] mainly by Boris Berezovskiy." He noted that "this
naturally affects their [the media outlets] actions, especially where Russia's finances are concerned. If a financial organization or a major financier has clout on a certain channel, it is difficult to keep from not using this enormous cannon in the interests of that financial structure."

However, when asked about the ownership of his own media organization, Svanidze denied that his programming was influenced by the state, or more specifically Anatoli Chubais. Svanidze claimed that Chubais was simply too busy to concern himself with the operations of a TV and radio station (Argumenty i fakty No. 39, September 1997; FBIS-SOV-97-267)

FEDERAL ASSEMBLY

Yel'tsin's legislative record assessed

Aleksandr Kotenkov, the president's representative in the State Duma, said that the president has submitted about 200 bills during the entire existence of the State Duma -- most of them to the Duma of the previous session. One hundred of these bills were not even examined. With such legislative intransigence on the part of the Duma, it is no wonder that the Russian Federation continues to be ruled by presidential edicts and decrees. If the Duma were to improve drastically its legislative efficiency, it might be able to make a case that rule by decree is undemocratic. But until this happens, the everyday needs of the world's largest country will have to be addressed by executive fiat. (Rossiyskiye vesti, 29 Sep 97; FBIS-SOV-97-268)

Russian Federation: Armed Forces

By Lt. Col. Dwyer Dennis and CDR Curtis Stevens

Russia fully engaged in world arms market growth

According to figures released by the London International Institute for Strategic Studies (IISS), the world arms market grew by 8 percent in arms deliveries from
1995 to 1996, amounting to nearly $40 billion (constant 1995 prices). The Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) stated in its SIPRI-97 Annual Report that Russia held second place in terms of world arms exports, accounting for approximately 20 percent of world-wide arms exports. A significant and growing region for arms importing is East and Southeast Asia. Annual growth in defense expenditures of the ASEAN member countries is projected at a level of six percent, making the area ripe for arms sales. Russia has now made considerable sales in these countries, historically a US market, marked by the 1994 sale of 18 MiG-29s to Malaysia for a reported $600 million. On 17 October, a $34.4 million modernization contract for the MiGs was signed. The modernization effort will include mid-air refueling capability, increased payload, and arming with the newest Russian air-to-air missiles RVV-AE which has a range of 50 kilometers. This missile system gives multiple launching and reaim-during-flight capabilities. (ITAR-TASS, 0841 GMT, 17 Oct 97; FBIS-SOV-97-290) This is the latest example of Russia's willingness to market leading quality products.

Other sales in this region include six Su-27s (worth $180 million) in 1995 to Vietnam with plans to buy another 24 aircraft for approximately $800 million, as well as 12 Su-30K fighters and eight Mi-17-1B helicopters to Indonesia this past August. Talks are underway with Burma for MiG-29s and Mi-35 helicopters. In addition, the MiG-29 is to participate in an upcoming Phillipine competition. (Delovoy mir, 22 Oct 97; FBIS-SOV-97-301)

While Russia appears to be pursuing aggressively the arms export market, there have been some troubles. Ukraine has continued to stand as a direct competitor to Russia as witnessed by the $650 million contract with Pakistan for 320 T-80UD tanks. Progress on that contract was discussed on 22 October in Kiev with a Pakistani delegation. Though Ukraine has the manufacturing facilities, many components currently must be supplied by Russia. Ukraine is apparently seeking
Influence by the US is being blamed for Thailand's withdrawal of tender for a Russian armored personnel carrier (APC). The Russian military attache in Thailand announced on 23 October that Thai military officials had yielded to US pressure to refuse a contract with Russia and substitute a US APC as a finalist in the competition. (ITAR-TASS, 1808 GMT, 23 Oct 97; FBIS-SOV-97-296)

While arms exports appear to be on the increase for Russia overall, Russian Defense Minister Sergeev repeated his warning on 15 October that the reform of the Russian armed forces must included a "cardinal reorganization of the military-industrial complex." He says that there are too great of reserves in the defense industrial complex and that the 1998 budget can only fund 780,000 workers versus the 2.5 million currently employed. He stated that Russia cannot afford 37 aircraft-building enterprises, citing the six types of fighters currently being developed in Russia as compared to the US's two and Western Europe's one. While the privatization of Russia's defense industry continues, we can expect to see massive consolidation not unlike the mergers that have occurred in the past three years in the US defense industry. (Interfax, 0635 GMT, 15 Oct 97; FBIS-SOV-97-288)

**Mir to be de-orbited in 1999**
The general director of the Russian Space Agency announced the Mir space station would be de-orbited and allowed to disintegrate in the atmosphere towards the end of 1999. The breaking phase of Mir's orbit will be designed to allow the space station to break up and burn up over the ocean. While the end of Mir is now in sight, Russian work on its portions of the Alpha international space station appear to be on track. Although many portions of the Russian space program are poorly financed, Russian Space Agency officials announced that
government funding of the Alpha modules was adequate. A December 1998 launch is planned. (Agence France-Presse, 23 Oct 97, 29 Oct 97; clari.net)

Pacific shipyard woes
The Russian Navy refloated a decommissioned nuclear submarine which sank at its berth at Petropavlovsk-Kamchatsky on 29 May 1997. A dozen aging decommissioned submarines are awaiting destruction but so far only two have been cut up because of funding shortfalls. Rear Admiral Alexander Nescheret, commander of the Petropavlovsk submarine flotilla, said the federal government program to dismantle former warships was "coming apart in practice." (Agence France-Presse, 23 Oct 97; clari.net)

The admiral's comments come as 500 workers at a submarine maintenance facility in Vladivostok appealed to Japanese Prime Minister Hashimoto for aid. In the letter to the prime minister, the workers stated the government arrears to the plant forced the layoff of 60 percent of the workforce and warned of a possible ecological disaster if the Russian government did not act. (Agence France-Presse, 30 Oct 97; clari.net)

Strategic forces modernization planned
Russia's defense ministry plans to purchase six TU-160 "Blackjack" strategic bombers from the Kazan Aircraft Production Association, the head of the Tupolev organization reported. The six planes were still in the production pipeline when President Yel'tsin halted new production in January 1992. Five aircraft are already ready for delivery and the sixth was still in construction. Russia currently has six "Blackjack" bombers in its airforce inventory; Ukraine inherited 19 of the planes from the Soviet Union. (Jamestown Foundation Monitor, 29 Oct 97)

In other strategic news, commanders of the Russian Strategic Rocket Forces and the United States Strategic Command have agreed to an exchange program where personnel from one country will work with their counterparts for one week.
Each "shadow" team will include a range of ranks. (Jamestown Foundation Monitor, 30 Oct 97)

Newly Independent States: CIS

By Mark Jones

CIS summit: Much to do about nothing

Those expecting great progress or sweeping change from the CIS Heads of State meeting were predictably disappointed. At least at past summits the leaders signed some documents and made some resolutions. During this conference, however, not one document was signed, not one conflict was resolved, and no agenda was followed. All the work done by the subordinate councils seems to have been for nothing.

As in the past, some leaders came to the meeting pushing for increased economic and political integration. Some sought only to improve economic relations, and still others opposed any strengthening of the CIS structures. There were leaders who accused Russia of undermining the commonwealth by refusing to treat member states as equals. Others believed that the formation of unions, namely the Belarus-Russian Union and the Customs Union, hurt the organization because they provide a "multi-tracked" system of integration. By the time the conference ended, no leaders changed their fundamental position on the state of the commonwealth.

Some reports indicate that there was a good deal of heated discussion and name calling at the closed-doors sessions. Presidents Shevardnadze and Yel'tsin admitted as much in their post-summit news conference. Yel'tsin said Russia was "singled out" and received the majority of the criticism.
The one thing the leaders did agree on was the fact that the council was incapable of implementing the decisions it makes. To remedy this, President Yel'tsin suggested strengthening the secretariat and reorganizing the bureaucracy. Strangely enough, most of the "reforms" are actually components of the CIS charter. Yel'tsin called for rotating the leadership of key CIS councils (which to this point have always been held by Russians -- in direct opposition to the charter) and for formalizing the dates of the Heads of State summits as the last ten days of March and October.

During the meeting, President Yel'tsin decided not to address any of the prepared agenda items and instead pushed them all back to the prime ministers. According to Yel'tsin, the items were "not presidential issues." He went on to say that from now on, the heads of state would concentrate on solving "strategic issues" and said, "Documents which can be signed by premiers should be signed by premiers" (Infotag and ITAR-TASS, 23 Oct 97; FBIS-SOV-97-296). He then decided to schedule an "emergency session" of the council on 23 January 1998, at which these delegated issues will be reconsidered.

This might reflect a new vision for how the organization is to work. Up until now, the bureaucracy worked very much like the Politburo -- only the top-most organ had the authority to make decisions. If Yel'tsin's decision takes hold, it may indicate that the concept of delegation might finally be taking root in Russia. On the other hand, this may be a move on Yel'tsin's part to divert some of the criticism for the failure of the CIS away from him personally.

The issue of Russian/CIS peacekeeping forces in Georgia was discussed at the summit. During the run-up, Georgia indicated that it would ask for the troops to be withdrawn (as it has done for the past two summits). At the meeting, however, President Shevardnadze caved in and agreed to extend the unit's mandate until 31 December (Interfax, 23 Oct 97; FBIS-SOV-97-296). This is an arbitrary date because, as we have seen in the past, only the chairman of the Council of Heads
of State can decide to pull out the forces. Yeltsin has been the chairman since the inception of the CIS and has said he won't make such a decision without consulting the other leaders (at a CIS summit). Since the next council will not meet until late February, the status of the peacekeepers will once again become nebulous on 1 January 1998.

**Newly Independent States: Western Region**

*By Mark Jones*

**UKRAINE**

*What time is it?*

President Kuchma was not happy with the decision of the Crimean Supreme Council to legalize a third time zone (Moscow time) on the peninsula and ordered the decision suspended. Kuchma issued a decree calling the act unconstitutional and stipulated that the issue of timekeeping was not within the purview of the Crimean Council (ITAR-TASS, 18 October 97; FBIS-TEN-97-291).

**BELARUS**

*Dangerous liaisons*

Ivan Antanovich, the Belarusian Minister of Foreign Affairs, announced that Belarus intends to open an embassy in Tehran. Antanovich, in the capital on an official visit, said Belarus is keen to develop political, economic, and cultural links with Iran (Radio Minsk, 0800 GMT, 29 Oct 97; FBIS-SOV-97-302).

**MOLDOVA**

*So much for negotiations*

Last edition we reported on a power-sharing agreement worked out by Russia, Moldova, and the Dniestr republic. It seemed at that time that a base agreement would be signed by all parties and that contentious issues would be addressed in separate documents. It now seems that the upstarts in Tiraspol have different
ideas. Valery Litskai, the chief negotiator and secretary of state of the self-proclaimed republic, said his leaders will not sign the document, worked out with the help of Russian Duma leader Seleznev, because it "went too far" (Basapress, 17 Oct 1997; FBIS-SOV-97-291). There has been no official reaction from Russia or Moldova, but this action must be seen as a slap in the face to Seleznev.

**OSCE to Russia: Get out**

Niels Helveg Petersen, acting chair of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), called for "an immediate and complete withdrawal of Russian troops from eastern Moldova" (Basapress, 17 Oct 1997; FBIS-SOV-97-291). In his opinion, the withdrawal would help stabilize the situation in Moldova and foster the resolution of the Dniester conflict.

**He just doesn't get it**

One thing that can be said for Dniestr leader Igor Smirnov is that he is persistent. Even though not a single CIS leader has recognized or endorsed his claim for a separate republic, and even though both the Russian and Ukrainian presidents continue to insist that Moldova will be treated as one country, Smirnov decided to petition all CIS leaders to have his "republic" admitted to the Commonwealth (Infotag, 23 Oct 1997; FBIS-SOV-97-296).

Smirnov then blew an opportunity to discuss the matter with the very people who could help him at a pre-summit meeting with the presidents of Ukraine, Russia, and Moldova. Smirnov simply failed to show up. This did not please President Yel'tsin, who commented, "Igor Smirnov is having a birthday today, and this event seems more important for him than our meeting here."

**Carrots and sticks**

Russian Duma Chairman Gennadi Seleznev has found a way to pressure the Moldovan government into making concessions to the breakaway Dniestrian region. Speaking to the Moldovan parliament, Seleznev said that unsettled relations
between Chisinau and Tiraspol hamper Russian-Moldovan cooperation and slow the ratification of the 1990 treaty on interstate relations. He went on to explain that some factions in the Russian Duma link the ratification of the treaty to "progress" in the Transdniestr settlement (Interfax, 29 Oct 97; FBIS-SOV-97-302). It may have been more honest for him to say, If you give in to Tiraspol, we will ratify the seven-year old agreement and pull our forces out of the region.

Newly Independent States: Central Asia

By Monika Shepherd

TAJIKISTAN

_Uzbek officers back Col. Khudoiberdiev's attacks on Tajik forces_

Colonel Mahmud Khudoiberdiev has been held responsible for two recent assaults on Tajik government forces. The first one occurred on 16 October, when 200 of Col. Khudoiberdiev's men attacked the Tajik Presidential Guard's headquarters in Dushanbe, killing 14 guardsmen and wounding 20. The operation was launched from camps set up near the Tajik villages of Kanori and Andjir, located approximately 10-15 km away from the Uzbek border (Interfax, 1310 GMT, 28 Oct 97; FBIS-SOV-97-301).

The second assault was launched during the early morning of 26 October 1997, when armed detachments attacked the Gulkhos border post (manned by Tajik border troops and Presidential Guard forces), which is located in Tursunzoda District's Shirkent Gorge, 85 kilometers west of Dushanbe and close to the Uzbek-Tajik border. The attack began around 12:00 am, when the border post was assaulted from three sides with grenade launchers and machine guns, and continued for approximately four hours. Two border guards and nine Presidential Guard troops were killed during this raid (Interfax, 1443 GMT, 27 Oct 97; FBIS-UMA-97-300).
Tajik government authorities believe that members of Uzbekistan's military leadership provided Col. Khudoiberdiev with support for this attack, based on the testimony of Kasim Babaev, the southern Khatlon Region administration's former deputy chief, and one of Col. Khudoiberdiev's closest associates, who voluntarily turned himself in to Tajik government forces prior to the attack on the border post. Babaev stated that he did not believe that the aid provided to Col. Khudoiberdiev's forces was sanctioned by the Uzbek government, but that it was an independent initiative, carried out by individual military officers. He also testified that Col. Khudoiberdiev's two previous operations against the Tajik government (in January-February 1996 and in August 1997) had received backing from these Uzbek officers. Following Col. Khudoiberdiev's unsuccessful attack on government forces last August, he and a number of his field commanders and troops (including Babaev) fled to Uzbekistan and remained there until 20 October. Upon entering Uzbekistan (via the South Shartuz sector on the Tajik side of the border), they were stopped by officers of the Uzbek border guard, who informed the colonel that although they did not have official permission to do so, they would permit him and his men to enter the country for a short period of time (ITAR-TASS, 0910 GMT, 27 Oct 97; FBIS-UMA-97-300).

Led by Major-General Ghaffur Mirzoev, the Presidential Guard immediately launched an operation to locate and capture Col. Khudoiberdiev's forces. They spent two days searching the Shirkent Gorge and, according to Maj.-Gen. Mirzoev, managed to corner 200 of Col. Khudoiberdiev's men near the Uzbek border by 28 October (ITAR-TASS, 1455 GMT, 28 Oct 97; FBIS-SOV-97-301). Maj.-Gen. Mirzoev also informed reporters that his troops had found the body of Tursunzade's ex-mayor and former Popular Front commander, Ibod Boimatov, on 28 October (Interfax, 1310 GMT, 28 Oct 97, FBIS-SOV-97-301). Ibod Boimatov was also an associate and ally of Col. Khudoiberdiev, and participated in the January-February 1996 anti-government operation, after which he is rumored to have fled to Afghanistan. The circumstances of his death are unclear.
As of 30 October, Tajik Presidential Guard commander Maj.-Gen. Mirzoev reported that most of Col. Khudoiberdiev's forces had been neutralized and that the situation in the Shirkent Gorge was under control. He also stated that about 30 of the anti-government militia's men had been killed and 15 had been taken prisoner (Interfax, 1429 GMT, 30 Oct 97, FBIS-SOV-97-303). Maj.-Gen. Mirzoev's units have been able to obtain valuable information about Col. Khudoiberdiev's operations from the prisoners, although this information will not be released until the Presidential Guard's mission has been successfully concluded (Interfax, 0443 GMT, 28 Oct 97; FBIS-SOV-97-301). Maj.-Gen. Mirzoev was able to tell journalists on 30 October that the prisoners had corroborated Kasim Babaev's claim that part of Col. Khudoiberdiev's forces were based in Uzbekistan and that some armed groups had also been hiding in the mountains of northwestern Tajikistan for a few months (Interfax, 1429 GMT, 30 Oct 97; FBIS-SOV-97-303).

The Uzbek government has denied any possibility of the existence of Tajik anti-government militia bases on its territory. Uzbek officials began meeting with representatives of the Tajik government on 28 October to discuss ways of dealing with the armed insurgency on the Uzbek-Tajik border (Interfax, 0711 GMT, 30 Oct 97; FBIS-SOV-97-303). On 30 October, Moscow NTV reported that Uzbekistan's special services had offered their help in tracking down the remainder of Col. Khudoiberdiev's forces, and Tajik Security Minister Saidamir Zuhurov reported that a joint group of Tajik and Uzbek investigators had started work in Tashkent (NTV, 1100 GMT, 30 Oct 97; FBIS-SOV-97-303).

Moscow NTV also reported that a new round of fighting had broken out between Tajikistan's Presidential Guard and Col. Khudoiberdiev's armed groups in the Shirkent Gorge and that, according to military reconnaissance information, the insurgents were holding a number of the residents from the nearby village of Gulkhos hostage. The precise number of hostages was not yet known at the time of the report (NTV, 1100 GMT, 30 Oct 97; FBIS-SOV-97-303).
In an interview with Nezavisimaya gazeta on 31 October, Col. Mahmud Khudoiberdiev reported that his forces had repelled the Tajik Presidential Guard's attack. He also stated that he was ready to continue fighting for another ten years, if necessary, in order to exert pressure on the Tajik government to stop persecuting his supporters, and to accept his own return to Tajikistan (RFE/RL Newsline, Vol 1, No. 150, 31 Oct 97).

Comment
Kasim Babaev's testimony and the reports given by some of those captured by the Presidential Guard do seem to justify the Tajik government's suspicions that Col. Khudoiberdiev was receiving aid from forces in Uzbekistan. However, Babaev's testimony also raises many new questions. It is not yet clear just how much aid and funding the Uzbek officers supplied to Col. Khudoiberdiev, nor can we be sure at this point that he was the only Tajik military officer receiving this type of support. Another issue is whether Col. Khudoiberdiev has any significant ties to the Leninobod faction, which was excluded from power for the first time in decades when Russian military leaders appointed Emomali Rahmonov to head the government in 1992. In recent years, many residents of Leninobod Oblast' have expressed considerable sentiment against President Rahmonov's government, and in 1996 former prime minister Abdumalik Abdullojonov founded the secular opposition party known as the National Revival Bloc. Abdullojonov requested representation for his party at the inter-Tajik peace negotiations, and his request was backed by the United Tajik Opposition (UTO), but President Rahmonov refused to allow the National Revival Bloc to participate in the peace process, perhaps fearing the strength of a possible UTO-National Revival Bloc alliance.

President Rahmonov may have also believed that the National Revival Bloc was created at least partly as a front for Uzbek interests in Tajikistan. Leninobod Oblast' is populated by a large Uzbek minority, and historically the Leninobod
political faction has had a close relationship with the Uzbek government. Thus, this leads one to wonder whether there are any connections between Col. Khudoiberdiev and the old Leninobod faction and whether he has any links to Abdumalik Abdullojonov and his National Revival Bloc.

The Uzbek military officers' motives for backing Col. Khudoiberdiev would seem to be fairly clear at this point. They undoubtedly hope to regain some influence in the Tajik government by providing the colonel with enough support to enable him to force President Rahmonov to grant him a voice in Tajikistan's affairs, including the inter-Tajik peace process. Although it is unlikely that the Uzbek government sanctioned any of the officers' activities vis-a-vis Khudoiberdiev, it is also difficult to believe that President Karimov is completely ignorant of their actions. Should Col. Khudoiberdiev eventually prove to be successful in his endeavors against the Tajik government, we may see Uzbekistan's role in Tajik affairs grow again. Even if the colonel's efforts fail in their ultimate goal, he may be able to push Tajikistan into such a state of anarchy, that the Uzbek government will have no trouble asserting its influence in Tajikistan.

Newly Independent States: Baltic States

By Kate Martin

Yel'tsin officially offers security guarantee...

In a meeting with Lithuanian President Algirdas Brazauskas, Russian President Boris Yel'tsin officially offered a series of initiatives on security guarantees for the Baltic states. The offer of unilateral obligation by the Russian Federation would allow inter-state relations to "be based on a solid basis of mutual security and confidence," Yel'tsin said in Moscow on 24 October. (ITAR-TASS, 1346 GMT, 24 Oct 97; FBIS-SOV-97-297) Baltic reaction was, for the most part, not surprising, although Brazauskas did say an advisory council on foreign policy--consisting of Brazauskas, Seimas Chairman Vytautas Landsbergis, Foreign Minister Algirdas
Saudargas, Defense Minister Ceslovas Stankevicius, MP and head of the foreign policy committee Mecys Laurinkus, and presidential foreign adviser Neris Germanas--would look into the proposals. Later Landsbergis signalled the fate of the proposal, describing the offer as one that would make Lithuania a protectorate. However, the Seimas chairman did encourage Russia to announce additional friendly intentions, such as to refrain from attacking, to lift double customs duties, or to draw up a readmission treaty. (ELTA-Lithuanian News Agency, 27 Oct 97) As reactions to earlier Russian proposals had predicted, Brazauskas' Baltic colleagues did not welcome the idea of turning to Russia for security. Latvian President Guntis Ulmanis pointed out that his country had not requested any such security guarantee from Russia (Interfax, 0732 GMT, 26 Oct 97; FBIS-SOV-97-299) and described the offer as "unacceptable" (ITAR-TASS, 1331 GMT, 27 Oct 97; FBIS-SOV-97-300). In a more softly worded rejection, an Estonian diplomat told Interfax that guarantees offered by one country would not be sufficient. (Interfax, 1046 GMT, 27 Oct 97; FBIS-SOV-97-300) Less diplomatic was Eino Tamm, chairman of the Riigikogu's Foreign Affairs Committee: "To a certain degree, such a statement may also be taken as Russia's endeavor to trap the Baltic states in its sphere of influence," he said. (Baltic News Service Daily Report, 1900 ZULU, 24 Oct 97)

... while Baltic, US officials hammer out charter agreement

At the same time that Baltic leaders were reviewing and rejecting Russia's promise of protection, US government officials were hard at work on the US-Baltic Charter, which will offer no concrete security guarantees. The document, according to representatives of the National Security Council and the US State Department, is reportedly 99 percent complete and, while containing no guarantees, will have a strong statement on security and US support for the Baltic states to choose their own alliances. (Baltic News Service Daily Report, 1300 ZULU, 24 Oct 97)
Recommendations for treatment of non-citizens receive disparate responses

After years of denying that Russian-speaking non-citizens faced any extraordinary difficulties living in the Baltic states of Estonia and Latvia (often in response to Russian saber-rattling that such persons were suffering in the extreme), the governments of those two countries seem to have reached the point, with the help of outside observers, of reluctantly acknowledging that there may be some surmountable difficulties. The Estonian Cabinet agreed to extend the mandate of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) in Tallinn for another year—a move which Danish Foreign Minister (and OSCE chairman) Niels Helveg Petersen described as a wise decision. (Baltic News Service Daily Report, 1600 ZULU, 23 Oct 97) This extension followed the acceptance of recommendations by OSCE High Commissioner for National Minorities Max van der Stoel concerning naturalization and language teaching. After his 22 October meeting with the commissioner, Estonian Prime Minister Mart Siimann announced that his government would create the position of ombudsman to monitor the problems of non-Estonians and their integration. (Baltic News Service Daily Report, 1600 ZULU, 22 Oct 97) Earlier in the Fall Estonian President Lennart Meri had announced the easing of examination requirements.

Van der Stoel's recommendations in Latvia did not encounter such a warm reception. The commissioner stressed the need to grant citizenship to children born in post-1991 Latvia, and the necessity to draft the state language law in accordance with international human rights organizations. Latvian President Guntis Ulmanis took umbrage at the recommendations, which he saw as targeting unfairly the Latvian state's autonomy. Such prodding from Europe, he said, "could create a feeling that we (Latvians) ourselves are not authorized to define a status of our native language." (DIENA, 30 Oct 97; LETA, Latvian National News Agency, 30 Oct 97) Controversy over the draft language law is not new; at least in part due to the voicing of concern by a number of European
states' ambassadors the previous week, the Saeima's education, research and
culture committee had voted to send the draft law to European institutions such
as the Council of Europe and the OSCE for examination before further legislative
steps were taken. (Baltic News Service Daily Report, 1600 ZULU, 22 Oct 97)

ESTONIA

Military woes continue

Relations between Defense Minister Andrus Oovel and the parliament's Defense
Commission worsened when the minister announced at the end of the committee
meeting that he didn't take the commission seriously. [Baltic News Service Daily
Report, 2100 ZULU, 23 Oct 97] The commission had expressed dissatisfaction
with the government's investigation into the drowning of soldiers during a training
exercise in September, and had suggested a few days earlier that Prime Minister
Mart Siimann discharge Oovel. Refusing to heed the commission's
recommendation, Siimann noted that, while there were issues needing to be
addressed, "State defense problems cannot be reduced to two individuals'
discharge, the problems are deeper ...." He added that work to resolve the
troubles was progressing. (Baltic News Service Daily Report, 1600 ZULU, 22 Oct
97)