PRESIDENCY

Yel'tsin predicts better winter

In his weekly radio address, President Yel'tsin endeavored to reassure the population that his government had been working hard to ensure "normal heat and power supply" through the upcoming winter. (Rossiyskaya gazeta, 15 Nov 97; Johnson's Russia List #1372) While a winter without heat disruptions would certainly be noteworthy, Yel'tsin's explanation of why his government could now focus on such issues was even more interesting: "with every passing year, we are less obsessed with global ideas and pay increasingly more attention to the daily needs of people." About time, if true.

Kazakov sacked over "The History of Privatization"

President Yel'tsin dismissed his First Deputy Head of the Presidential Administration, Aleksandr Kazakov, on Friday for his involvement in a book deal, which netted him a handsome advance. (RIA-novosti, 15 Nov 97) Kazakov, who once headed up the State Property Committee, is a close ally, and indeed co-author with, First Deputy Premier Anatoli Chubais, who did not emerge unscathed from this scandal. While Kazakov has fallen from presidential graces, he will still remain gainfully employed. He retains the chairmanship of the board of Gazprom, a position he achieved while still head of the State Property Committee. (The Moscow Times, 8 Jun 96; ISCIP database)

Kazakov has been replaced by the Deputy Prefect for Moscow's Zelenograd district, Viktorkiya Mitina. Mitina is a relative unknown, however she did work on both of Yel'tsin's previous presidential campaigns, supervising regional support
for Yeltsin on the 1996 presidential election campaign team. (Agence France-Presse, 20 Nov 97; clari.net news)

While details of the corruption scandal follow in the "Government" section, it may be more appropriate to contemplate here the timing of the dismissals which ensued. There have been countless stories hinting at high-level corruption circulating throughout the media, particularly following the Svyazinvest auctions. Why did Yeltsin choose to act on this information and why now? Some suggest the earlier Berezovsky dismissal, which was engineered by Chubais and Nemtsov, holds the key. Having rid the administration of a Chubais "rival", Yeltsin moved to weaken the Chubais faction in a familiar presidential pattern of balancing the relative power of his close advisers. Possibly. It may be important to be mindful, however, that Chubais and Berezovsky were, until this summer's auctions, playing on the same team and together brought several new members into the Presidential Administration. Where do their mutual friends, for example, the new Chief of Staff Valentin Yumashev, stand on issues dividing the tycoon and the privatization tsar?

GOVERNMENT

Was Chernomyrdin born under a lucky star?

Aleksandr Minkin, reporting for Novaya gazeta (12 Nov 97), described a nearly half-million-dollar advance paid for a manuscript on privatization and called for a criminal investigation of the deal. (ITAR-TASS Press Review, 15 Nov 97; NEXIS)

The authors, including First Deputy Premier Chubais and Kazakov mentioned above, were all core members of the economic reform team which initiated and supervised Russia's privatization plan. The issue, even more questionable than the size of the advance, is that the publishing house which paid for the manuscript is part of the Oneksimbank empire, owned by the controversial Svyazinvest auction winner Vladimir Potanin.
Having already dismissed one chief of the State Property Committee, Alfred Kokh, in August for involvement in a similar [the same?] scandal, President Yel'tsin was finally faced with a corruption investigation that threatens the once seemingly-untouchable Chubais. The fallout so far has resulted in the dismissal of the current State Property Chief Maksim Boiko and the head of the Bankruptcy Administration Petr Mostovoi. Chubais was initially given a stern reprimand by Yel'tsin, who said "such activities cannot be allowed." (Reuters, 15 Nov 97; clari.net news)

The decision not to fire Chubais outright, which is currently under fierce attack from the State Duma, was made after considering the "whole complex of economic, financial and investment consequences of these resignation," according to Yel'tsin's press service. (RIA-novosti, 18 Nov 97) In other words, the dismissal of Chubais could have serious ramifications for the Russian Stock Market and threaten foreign investment.

This situation has resulted in a markedly higher profile for the prime minister, who was vaulted into a position of mediator and peacemaker between the president and the primarily Communist opposition. As a result of his negotiations, a deal has been reached whereby Chubais will lose his post as finance minister, but retain his first deputy status. (RIA-novosti, 20 Nov 97) The presidential decision, unpublished at this writing, apparently states that deputy premiers cannot simultaneously hold ministerial portfolios. The ramifications of this decision would also affect First Deputy Premier Nemtsov, who, although unsullied by this scandal, would be forced to give up the post of Minister for Fuel and Energy.

Chernomyrdin refrained from gloating, but showed little sympathy for Chubais and his co-authors. In his comments on the book deal, Chernomyrdin noted that the various authors were "qualified, knowledgeable people" and therefore "it can't be said that they've just made a mistake. There is something else to it." (RIA-novosti, 15 Nov 97)
Apparently the Procurator's Office agrees that there is more to it. Two of the authors, already out of state service, Alfred Kokh and Arkadi Yevstafyev, were called to the Moscow City Procurator's Office for questioning. (RIA-novosti, 18 Nov 97)

New appointments have already been made to replace Boiko and Mostovoi. They will each be succeeded by their first deputies. Farid Gazizulin will now head up the beleaguered State Property Committee and Georgi Tal is the new chief at the Federal Bankruptcy Administration. (RIA-novosti 18 Nov 97)

**Russian Federation: Foreign Relations**
*By Chandler Rosenberger*

**Maintaining split in UN, Russia secures role as intermediary to Iraq**
By preserving an anti-American front with France and China on the Security Council of the United Nations, Russia has won itself the role of intermediary to Saddam Hussein, and will play a critical role in upcoming negotiations over the monitoring of Iraq's weapons of mass destruction.

Russia's success was ensured on Wednesday, 12 November, when the United States was unable to convince the Security Council to pass a resolution threatening Iraq with military reprisals if it did not allow Americans to remain on teams investigating Iraqi compliance with orders to halt its production of biological, chemical and nuclear weapons. (Monitor, 14 Nov 97).

Russian Foreign Minister Yevgeni Primakov secured Chinese support during extensive talks with his Chinese counterpart, Qian Qichen, on 11 November. (Interfax, 1144 GMT, 12 Nov 97; FBIS-SOV-97-316) Russian President Boris
Yel'tsin met with Chinese President Jiang Zemin from 9-11 November, and French Premier Lionel Jospin on 1 November.

Following the Security Council's endorsement of a weaker condemnation than Washington had wanted, President Bill Clinton and Secretary of State Madeleine Albright were forced to seek Russian intervention, rather than the direct US-Iraqi talks that the White House had originally sought. Clinton consulted Russian President Boris Yel'tsin on Sunday, 16 November, while Albright began speaking to Russian Foreign Minister Yevgeni Primakov daily.

The administration was reduced to complaining from the sidelines about Russian and French complicity in the ensuing crisis. Speaking on CNN, Undersecretary of State Thomas Pickering said that the two nations bear some responsibility for the crisis because they abstained last month on a UN resolution seeking a travel ban on Iraqi officials over Iraq's withholding of information from weapons inspectors.

The abstentions, Pickering said, "at least were a contributing factor, perhaps, to enticing Saddam or maybe encouraging Saddam with the feeling that the unity of the Security Council had fallen." (The Associated Press, 16 Nov 97; Johnson's Russia List #1371)

In another move against the Western alliance, Russian officials also criticized Turkey for deploying forces in northern Iraq in an attempt to defeat Kurdish separatists.

"Turkish Army units must immediately be withdrawn from sovereign Iraq," Russian Foreign Ministry Spokesman Gennadiy Tarasov said at a briefing in Moscow on 11 November. (Interfax, 1800 GMT, 11 Nov 97; FBIS-UMA-97-315)

Russia courts Asian neighbors China...
Signing a demarcation of the 2,800-mile border between their two nations, Russian President Boris Yel'tsin and Chinese President Jiang Zemin pledged to reinforce a strategic partnership with increased trade, including substantial arms sales.

The agreement was signed during Yel'tsin's 9-11 November trip to China, which included a 21-gun salute in Beijing and a visit to the Chinese city of Harbin, which lies near the border with Siberia. The agreement leaves only a 25-mile section of the border in the east, surrounding two islands, unresolved.

"We have solved a problem which remained unsolved for several decades. This is a concrete embodiment of the friendship between the two nations," Yel'tsin said. (Kyodo, 1122 GMT, 10 Nov 97; FBIS-CHI-97-314)

...and Japan
At informal talks that featured a trip to a Siberian bath house, Russian President Boris Yel'tsin and Japanese premier Ryutaro Hashimoto agreed to separate discussions of development of Siberian energy reserves from the ongoing dispute over the Kuril Islands.

Japan had previously maintained that investment in the Russian oil and gas industries would have to await resolution of the dispute over the islands, which Russia seized at the end of World War II. Japan still insists that the islands must be returned, but will now pursue a "multi-plane" approach that allows discussion of investments and the islands' status to run concurrently. (Financial Times (UK), 1 Nov 97; Johnson's Russia List #1327)

Zavarzin: Russian side of NATO Council will "firmly uphold interests"
Speaking in his first interview since his appointment as head of the Russian military delegation of the Russia-NATO Permanent Joint Council, Viktor Zavarzin
said his team "will uphold Russia's interests and security constructively, firmly and, if need be, harshly."

Zavarzin, whose last appointment was as commander of the peacekeeping forces in Tajikistan, said the members of his eleven-member delegation were drawn mostly from the Main Directorate of International Military Cooperation of the defense ministry and ministry specialists on disarmament. (RIA-novosti, Nezavisimaya gazeta, 5 Nov 97; Johnson's Russia List #1339)

**New US ambassador to Russia condemns religion law, backs START II**

James Collins, the new US ambassador to Russia, used his first press conference to warn against religious persecution, and to urge the Duma to pass the START II Treaty.

"The United States is going to speak out if we see religious persecution, and we believe that religious freedom is a fundamental aspect of the development of democracy," Collins said. He was referring in oblique to a new law requiring religious organizations to register with the Russian government, which some Catholic and Evangelical Protestant groups say discriminates against them.

Collins also urged the Duma to pass the START II Treaty before a visit from President Clinton in 1998. (Washington Times, 14 Nov 97; Johnson's Russia List #1364).

**French prime minister, in Moscow, calls for "multipolar world"**

Echoing a line first articulated as a mantra of Chinese-Russian relations, French Prime Minister Lionel Jospin endorsed a vision of the "multipolar" world during his trip to Moscow.

The doctrine, a thinly-disguised complaint of American hegemony, has commonly been endorsed only by developing or former Communist countries. French and
Russian gas companies angered Washington last month by agreeing to develop Iranian gas fields.

Jospin also noted France's understanding for Russia's anxieties over the expansion eastward of the NATO defense alliance and said Paris would strive to ensure Russia did not feel isolated. (The Straits Times (Singapore) 1 Nov 97; Johnson's Russia List #1330)

**Comment**

**The wages of economic diplomacy**

"Economic diplomacy," the long-standing foreign policy doctrine of the White House, was revealed this week to be an empty shell, as France and Russia, nominal friends of the United States, chose to pursue their own economic interests in Iraq rather than respond forcefully to a clear and present danger in the Middle East.

The White House has conducted its foreign policy as if it were an investment bank. Only countries that overtly threatened US interests, such as Saddam Hussein's Iraq, were to be pressured. The suspicious dealings of others, such as China, Russia and France, were to be overlooked in the interest of developing closer economic ties. These ties alone, it was assumed, would gradually intertwine the world's capitals in a web of common interests.

To rely on anonymous "market forces" as the primary agent of foreign policy is to adopt an essentially Marxist vision of the world order, according to which all actors on the international stage are motivated so strongly by their economic concerns that the potential for conflict is mitigated. Such a doctrine suits not only the executives of large American corporations, who seek deals abroad, but also the current occupants of White House, who crave international consensus above all. Why take a strong diplomatic stand, when one can instead assume that Boeing's negotiators will pursue the national interest themselves?
This essentially passive policy was bound to come undone the first time that the promise of economic gain came in conflict with the need to punish a renegade regime. Having done little to shore up the coalition that won the Gulf War, the United States now finds that France, an erstwhile partner, would rather pursue potential contracts in Baghdad (estimated at $13 billion) than hold the line against Iraq's recalcitrance.

France may merely be playing the fool. But Russia and China, two countries that sat out the Gulf War, have an even less appealing agenda. They recognize American foreign policy, for all the rhetoric of economic cooperation, to be a vacuum into which they can easily slip. On the one hand, they can spin ties to a range of unsavory countries without fearing serious repercussions. On the other, they can use the White House's own doctrine of the supremacy of economic interest to sow seeds of resentment among the world's poorer nations. It would be a fitting irony if the White House, hiding its passivity behind a range of global business contracts, were to be isolated and reviled as the very global hegemon it so adamantly refuses to be.

Russian Federation: Domestic Issues and Legislative Branch

By Michael Thurman

POLITICAL PARTIES

Lebed announces intention to run in presidential election

Coming as a surprise to no one, Aleksandr Lebed, chairman of the Russian People's Republican Party (RPRP), stated his intention of running for the presidency of the Federation. According to the general, Russia has already "...exceeded the limit for revolutions and wars. It must become strong, but without
imperial ambitions. Therefore, I will take part in the presidential elections," he said.

Regarding NATO expansion, Lebed said that the process "poses no threat to Russia at this stage. Membership of the North Atlantic alliance for the Czech Republic, Poland, and Hungary is the expression...of the common history of western civilization," he said.

"While NATO expands within the limits of the Western world, Russia will have to acknowledge its right to go ahead. It would be another matter if the expansion of the alliance were to enter the area of Russia's geopolitical interests and if there were to be any attempt to expand into the Baltic countries and Ukraine."

Which type of Russian president the West should prefer is unclear -- one who questions the value of military blocs as Yel'tsin does, or one, like Lebed, who accepts them and might set up one of his own (ITAR-TASS World Service, 0759 GMT, 6 Oct 97; FBIS-SOV-97-279)

**FEDERAL ASSEMBLY**

**Yel'tsin's potential dissolution of the Duma considered**

At the end of September President Yel'tsin sent a shock wave through the Russian political establishment by suggesting that dissolution of the lower house of parliament -- the State Duma -- would help to cure the political tension which has characterized executive-legislative relations of late. Yel'tsin listed several minor transgressions by the Duma as reasons for his proposal, leading many observers to claim that this was simply a ploy to bring the Duma under control.

The Constitution provides for the dissolution of the Duma in three ways: The Constitution provides three possible causes for the dissolution of the Duma: 1) Duma's three-time rejection of a candidate for prime minister; 2) a second vote of no-confidence in the government by the Duma in the course of three months; 3)
a request by the premier for a vote of confidence in the government in the lower house.

Of the three methods, the last is clearly the simplest method available to the president. In fact, Yel'tsin has used this tactic before. In June 1995, in response to the Duma's vote of no-confidence, Chernomyrdin's government threw the question of a vote of confidence back at the Duma, ruining the Duma deputies' political game and forcing them to retreat. In response to the debacle, the deputies decided to safeguard themselves by amending their procedural rules. The proposal was made by deputy Vishnyakov of the LDPR faction, and in effect said that the question on a vote of confidence -- by the premier -- could not be considered during the three-month period between votes of no confidence initiated by the Duma as a whole. The constitutionality of this new mechanism is unclear and has yet to be tested. Ultimately the Duma was not disbanded, and the vote of no confidence proffered by the Duma was rescinded by it on 21 October 1997. (Moskovskaya pravda, 1 Oct 97; FBIS-SOV-97-279)

REGIONS

Several treaties signed between the regions and the center
Vologda, Magadan, Bryansk, and Samara oblasts have signed "power-sharing" treaties with Moscow. The agreements are largely identical in scope and format, but allow for the special needs of each region. Each agreement provides for some form of demarcation of powers and responsibilities between the regions and the center. The wording is quite vague -- which, depending on the wisdom and strength of the court system, could be a good thing. This would allow the legislation the flexibility to respond to the clearly fluid political situation in Russia today, as well as to establish, if only in theory as yet, the idea that political power should be transparent and subject to law. But given Yel'tsin's courting of the regions at the expense of his foes at the center, this legislation may stand a good chance of at least beginning the dialogue as to where sovereignty in fact resides.
By treating with the regions, Moscow has admitted that sovereignty is in some way shared.

Article 9 of each treaty gives the regions standing in federal court to challenge the actions of the federal government. The oblasts "have the right to contest, in the appropriate court, legal enactments of the federal organs of executive power that regulate issues falling under the jurisdiction of Russian Federation subject, enactments inappropriate to the authority of federal organs of executive power in a sphere of joint jurisdiction of the Russian Federation and [oblasts], or enactments that unilaterally redistribute instruments of the jurisdiction and authority of [oblasts] as established by the Russian Federation Constitution and this Treaty."

This article has the potential to affect severely federal legislative and regulatory power, if, as noted above, the courts are wise -- and willing. How the judicial system operates is becoming increasingly important in forming the conduct of Russian political affairs (Rossiyskiye vesti, 25 Sep 97; FBIS-SOV-97-290)

Russian Federation: Armed Forces
By Lt. Col. Dwyer Dennis and LCDR Curtis Stevens

Russia's arms export industry is no fine-tuned machine
In spite of recently released numbers by the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) and others, there remains considerable evidence that the Russian defense industry is under considerable strain. NTV has recently reported on strikes occurring at two defense factories, the Ka-50 Black Shark Progress aircraft factory in Arsenyev on 4 November and the shipbuilding factory in Zvezda on 6 November 97. The basic reason for the strikes is lack of compensation. The workforce at the Arsenyev factory have not been paid for over a year. They have received only a twice-weekly bread ration. (NTV, 0900
Although Russia has reportedly succeeded in catching up on the back pay due its armed forces, there remains a large debt not only to its own indigenous defense industry but to some CIS nations. MTI reported on 5 November that Russian Deputy Prime Minister Vladimir Bulgak and Hungarian Minister of Industry, Trade and Tourism Szabolcs Fazakas have worked out a plan for Russia's repayment of debt owed Hungary which includes military deliveries totaling up to $240 million. (MTI, 1331 GMT, 5 Nov 97; FBIS-EEU-97-309) Obviously, the transfer of arms to pay past debt does not generate the revenue required to bolster an ailing economy. However, by clearing the debts, Russia may be hopeful that other future cooperative efforts and arms sales may transpire.

**Russia touts new weapons at Budapest exhibition...**

ITAR-TASS reported that Rosvooruzhenyiye State Company, responsible for Russian arms exports, would represent the nation's defense industry at the 11 November 97 arms exhibition. Examples of popular export products to be displayed included Sukhoi aircraft, The (Kamov) Ka-50 "Black Shark" helicopter, and the Mi-17-1A air defense missile system. The exhibition was expected to attract 80 firms from 16 countries. Rossiyskaya gazeta reported that innovation would not be the only emphasis, but that modernization would be stressed as a method to enhance capability at less cost. (ITAR-TASS, 1034 GMT, 6 Nov 97; FBIS-SOV-97-310, and Rossiyskaya gazeta, 11 Nov 97; FBIS-SOV-97-316)

...But arms export expert Trofimov claims Rosvooruzhenyiye is broke

In a Moskovskiy novosti interview under the rubric, "Arms Exports: War of Interests," Trofimov said that the failures of Rosvooruzhenyiye's efforts are the expected results of a variation of an imperfect Soviet system for exporting arms he describes as a vertically-integrated megastructure and the sharp decline in
the level of professional training of those engaged in the weapons export business. He points out that even under the Soviet rigid command system, there were still three organizations that traded arms. Today, there is only Rosvooruzheniye which effectively removes competitiveness and cements the state monopoly in arms sales. As a result, Trofimov claims that the prices of Russia's export goods are rising to world-market prices without commensurate increases in quality. He fingers a breakdown in practical training and developing arms market expertise as a partial culprit. (Moskovskie novosti, 3 Nov 97; FBIS-SOV-97-310) A report in Armeyskiy sbornik in August of this year dealing with problems at the State Flight Test Center (GLITs) is a good example. The article by Major General of Aviation Viktor Chirkin pointed out the disintegration of flight test capability and effectiveness largely due to budget cuts, resulting in fewer new equipment development tests and thus fewer flight hours. (Armeyskiy sbornik, Aug 97, No. 8; FBIS-SOV-97-310).

Russia's arms export system has some tough challenges: find ways to become more competitive and generate better cash flow to the defense industry with the burdens of old debt and unpaid defense work orders. These challenges will have to be met in an environment that Trofimov says is a shrinking arms market. He says that the annual world volume is actually dwindling to $17-20 billion with more countries forced to focus on modernization instead of rearmament.

Unrest continues at defense plants
Worker unrest continues at the Zvezda nuclear submarine repair facility despite a visit by a high level delegation from the defense ministry. Workers at the submarine yard have not been fully paid in over 15 months. Interestingly, the defense ministry officials that visited the repair yard said the shipyard should seek civilian orders to overcome its financial woes. (NTV, 0900 GMT, 4 Nov 97; FBIS-SOV-97-308, and Radio Rossil Network, 0800 GMT, 6 Nov 97; FBIS-SOV-97-310)
The new navy chief is Admiral Vladimir Kuroyedov, who was serving as Chief of the Navy Main Staff and First Deputy Navy Commander-in-Chief. Admiral Kuroyedov was born in 1944 in the Primorsky region. He graduated from the Pacific Higher Navy School in 1967. From 1967 until 1993 he served in the Pacific fleet in a number of afloat command and senior staff positions. He has commanded the Baltic Fleet and the Pacific Fleet. He has been in Moscow on the Main Navy Staff since July 1997. (ITAR-TASS, 1636 GMT, 8 Nov 97; FBIS-SOV-97-313, and Agence France-Presse, 1424 PST, 7 Nov 97; clari.net)

Newly Independent States: CIS
By Mark Jones

More CIS committee and commission meetings
Undaunted by the decreasing level of cooperation and effectiveness of their organization, CIS bureaucrats continue to swell their ranks and are doing their level best to look, smell, and feel more like the old USSR. The CIS Interparliamentary Assembly set up three permanent commissions to deal with foreign political issues, defense, and security. The chairmen of these committees, along with the leader of the local governments committee, met last week in St. Petersburg ostensibly to prepare for next year's proposed joint meeting between their parent organization and the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly. In addition to deciding that they needed to meet more often, the representatives discussed formulating a single stance on NATO enlargement. They also decided it would be in the commonwealth's interest to strengthen the "role of local and regional organs of power in tackling economic, social, and ecological issues" and then proposed setting up a "congress of local and regional organs" (ITAR-TASS, 31 Oct 97; FBIS-SOV-97-304). Apparently in the new CIS mind it is somehow possible to strengthen the autonomy of local organizations by centralizing their activities. Does anyone smell a Supreme Soviet?
Comment

It is impossible to miss Russia’s heavy hand in these dealings. Although the news reports do not reveal the identities of the subcommittee chairmen, we can assume they are the Russian or Belarusian leaders of their corresponding national organizations. The reports are also careful not say which countries sent representatives to the meeting or to give the results of any voting. Although most CIS member states are for further economic integration, none except Belarus and Russia wants anything to do with a common foreign or defense policy. The fact that the results of the meetings reflect Russia’s policies and run directly counter to those of countries trying to achieve equality in the CIS is indication enough that Moscow is calling the tune here.

CIS executive secretary accused of fraud

During a broadcast of the Vremya program on Russian Public Television (ORT), CIS Executive Secretary Ivan Korotchenya was accused of illegal financial dealings with the Russian Agency for Integration and Development (RAIR). Korotchenya claimed that the accusations against him and Russian Deputy Prime Minister/Minister for CIS Cooperation Valeri Serov, who was also implicated in the scandal, "stem from the struggle among clans to divide the Commonwealth into spheres of influence." He went on to say that, "Opponents of integration are trying to provoke a head-on collision primarily between the Belarusian and Russian states." RAIR was created by presidential decree 6 May 1996 to foster the development of integration between companies in CIS member states. The secretary said he had been requested to join the RAIR board of directors as an unpaid deputy to the chairman, who happens to be Serov, because of his "intimate knowledge" of the economic situation in the CIS." (Interfax, 3 Nov 97; FBIS-SOV-97-307, and Zvyazda, 4 Nov 97; FBIS-SOV-97-311)
To what clans is Korotchenya referring? Does he mean Russian First Deputy Prime Ministers Chubais and Nemtsov, or the competing groups of bankers? If he is referring to the CIS states which are pursuing policies different from Russia, Korotchenya will be hard-pressed to show that these states have any influence over Russian public television. Apparently Korotchenya believes the best defense is a good offense and has adopted a tactic of spreading as much mud and smoke as necessary to obscure his own tracks.

Newly Independent States: Western Region

By Mark Jones

More on Moldovan, Ukrainian border demarcation issues
A few months ago we reported on the joint Moldovan-Ukrainian border demarcation commission's work to resolve several outstanding border issues. In early November, Moldovan Prime Minister Ion Ciubuc and his Ukrainian counterpart, Vitaly Pustovoitenko, personally got into the act by traveling to the areas in question and basically endorsed the recommendations of the commission. The two ministers signed an agreement which calls for Ukraine to give up a 600-meter strip of land along the Danube river. This will allow Moldova to continue building an oil terminal with access to the Black Sea. In return, Chisinau leased an 8-kilometer portion of highway to Kiev which will allow cars and trucks to avoid two separate customs inspections. Both leaders said it was easier to get to the root of the issues by actually walking the ground instead of looking at maps and paper. The only section of the border now in question is the one with the breakaway Dniestr region, which will remain unresolved until the conflict itself is settled (Infotag, 7 Nov 97; FBIS-SOV-97-311).

Belarus units patrol border with Ukraine
Belarus moved units into position to patrol the border with Ukraine, which will be fully demarked by the end of the year. The border troops are implementing the
orders President Lukashenka gave earlier this year to beef up customs and border controls (Intelnews, 5 Nov 97; FBIS-SOV-97-309).

UKRAINE

High-level meetings in Tbilisi
President Kuchma recently traveled to Tbilisi for consultations with his Georgian counterpart. According to Izvestiya on 29 October, the two leaders discussed political and economic cooperation and signed a "Declaration of Two," which will serve as a "counterbalance to [the] unions and alliances within the CIS."
President Kuchma also called the CIS peacekeeping operation in Abkhazia "unproductive" and repeated his offer to send Ukrainian peacekeeping troops to the region. The two country's defense ministers, Vardiko Nadibaidze of Georgia and Aleksandr Kuzmuk of Ukraine, then agreed to create a joint peacekeeping battalion which will be deployed to safeguard transportation routes through Abkhazia. Nezavisimaya gazeta carried a report on 30 October that the ministers also signed a protocol on developing military-technical cooperation. (RFE/RL Newsline, 29-30 Oct 97).

Fuel shortages at some power plants "supercritical"
According to an Interfax report dated 5 November, some of Ukraine's power plants are running out of fuel. A senior Energy Ministry official, Vasyl Protsenko, said that fuel reserves were already depleted to levels usually encountered at the end of the winter (Interfax, 5 Nov 97; FBIS-SOV-97-309).

Nationalists and Communists battle in Lviv
During a rally and demonstration on 7 November in Lviv, Communists and Socialists engaged in several clashes with nationalists. According to press reports, five nationalists were detained by police for beating demonstrators and five people required medical aid. After the fighting, the Communist and Socialist parties blocked the morning session of the Ukrainian parliament and demanded that the interior minister, the chairman of the Security Service, and acting
prosecutor general provide a detailed report to the assembly. Communist leader
Petro Symonenko also demanded the formation of a parliamentary commission
backed by representatives of the Council of Europe and OSCE to investigate "the
spreading of Nazism in the western provinces" (Interfax, 11 Nov 97; FBIS-SOV-
97-315).

BELARUS
Belarusian foreign minister going south
Belarusian Foreign Minister Ivan Antonovich toured several Mid-Eastern
countries recently. He met with Lebanese President Ilyas al-Hirawi for
discussions on investments and economic cooperation (ITAR-TASS, 30 Oct 97;
FBIS-SOV-97-303). Next he traveled to Iraq, where he signed a "cooperation
pact" with Ba'th Party leaders (Belapan, 4 Nov 97; FBIS-NES-97-308).
Antonovich then flew to Iran where he discussed "socio-political and economic
issues." At a post meeting news conference he said his country and Iran "share
many views regarding international strategy, bilateral relations and specific
political assessments of the modern world" (Belapan, 5 Nov 97; FBIS-SOV-97-
309, and Zvyazda, 6 Nov 97; FBIS-SOV-97-314). It seems that Belarus isn't
happy with its title as outcast of Europe and would prefer to be known as proud
member of Rouge States Inc.

European relations remain strained
President Lukashenka answered continuing foreign criticism of his government
by stating that Belarus "will never revise the results of the nationwide referendum
on the country's new constitution in November 1996...We would like the Council
of Europe to understand that." He then claimed the cause of the strained
relations was not him or his governments actions, but the "double standards"
European organizations use in dealing with foreign countries. To drive his point
home, he pointed out that his country has never fired on its own parliament
In a related story (Belapan, 3 Nov 97; FBIS-SOV-97-307), Javier Ruperez, president of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly asked a delegation from the 13th Supreme Soviet -- the parliament disbanded by Lukashenka -- to attend the OSCE's Parliamentary Assembly standing committee's winter session. This action continues the record of legitimate structures snubbing Belarussian organizations, especially the Lukashenka appointed Supreme Soviet.

MOLDOVA

Secret agents to train in Russia
An aide to National Security Minister Tudor Botnaru told ITAR-TASS that Moldova's secret services will send their agents to Russia for training in the near future. Botnaru said the decision was made because the republic lacks the money to organize proper training (6 Nov 97; FBIS-SOV-97-310).

Most Moldovan leaders approve of MiG sale
The leaders of most Moldovan political parties, including the leaders in Tiraspol, approve of the sale of MiG-29 jet planes to the United States. Most cite economics as the reason for their acquiescence and some noted that the deal would substantially replenish Moldova's state budget. The only disputes arose over the issue of the sale price. The Dniestr officials claim the planes should have been sold for a much higher amount (Infotag, 6 Nov 97; FBIS-UMA-97-310).

Moldova, Dniestr leaders sign cooperation agreement
Moldovan Prime Minister Ion Cubac and the leader of the breakaway Dniestr region, Igor Smirnov, finally signed a basic agreement on social and economic cooperation. The document calls for cooperation in power engineering, industry, agriculture, transportation, construction, communications, customs and other fields, the government press service said. The agreement does not, however, address the more contentious issues at the root of the conflict (ITAR-TASS, 10 Nov 97; FBIS-SOV-97-314).
Newly Independent States: Baltic States
By Kate Martin

Allies react to Russian proposals
While the leaders of the three Baltic states were reviewing and, ultimately, rejecting Boris Yeltsin's proposal for Russia to provide security guarantees in the region, other European countries offered mixed reactions. Germany welcomed the guarantees, according to government spokesman Herbert Schmueling, who termed the offer sensational yet warranted. (Baltic News Service Daily Report, 1600 GMT, 25 Oct 97) Yet while Germany and Russia apparently agree on who should provide security for the Baltic states, other countries did not rush in with support. Swedish Foreign Minister Lena Hjelm-Wallen, who met with his Latvian counterpart in Stockholm at the end of October, stated the need to set up a new order of pan-European, rather than regional, security. (ITAR-TASS, 1816 GMT, 30 Oct 97; FBIS-SOV-97-303) Finland, another proponent of joint European security, also rejected outright the Russian proposal. (Suomen Yleisradio Network, 0700 GMT, 31 Oct 97; FBIS-WEU-97-304).

At an international conference devoted to security issues held early in November in Stockholm, US Undersecretary of State Ronald Asmus noted that the Baltic states and the US have all expressed clearly their support of the OSCE principle allowing countries to choose their own security guarantees. The United States' three-track policy of helping to develop security in the region, he said, included assisting the Baltic states in becoming strong candidates for NATO membership, supporting the improvement of relationships between the Baltic countries, the US, and EU members, and encouraging the development of ties between northern Europe and northern Russia. One factor that may affect the latter was the perceived shift in Russian policy from attempts to intimidate or isolate the
Baltic states towards one of maintaining the security status quo while cooperating on other issues. (Baltic News Service Daily Report, 1900 GMT, 7 Nov 97)

Non-citizen rights situation warrants attention in Latvia and Lithuania
Several internal and international groups have reviewed Latvia's policies towards non-citizens and have recommended substantive changes. Receiving the attention have been naturalization and employment restrictions for aliens. Also warranting change, most agree, is the withholding of citizenship from children born in Latvia after 1991.

Authors of the Human Development report in Latvia, sponsored by the UN Development Program, proposed that Latvia drop its "naturalization windows" and professional restrictions, and grant citizenship to children born in Latvia after 1991. (Baltic News Service Daily Report, 1600 GMT, 25 Oct 97). If these proposals sound familiar, it is probably because the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), and specifically its High Commissioner for Ethnic Minorities Max van der Stoel, has been suggesting similar changes for a while. Van der Stoel has been visiting Latvia twice a year since 1993 to prepare recommendations for the government to improve the situation of ethnic minorities. During his most recent visit, at the end of October, he reiterated the recommendations issued the previous week by the Human Development report authors. (Baltic News Service Daily Report, 1900 GMT, 30 Oct 97). The commissioner also argued against the adoption of Latvia's new draft language law since it fails to comply with the norms of international conventions. The draft law also has been criticized by the Baltic Sea Council Human Rights Commissioner and ambassadors of several European countries. (Baltic News Service Daily Report, 1700 GMT, 29 Oct 97) Aware that the make-up of the current government coalition precludes a unanimous agreement to change the current citizenship law--primarily due to the staunch opposition of the largest parliamentary factions, Fatherland and Freedom/LNNK--van der Stoel said he hoped that his recommendations would ignite active public discussions of the
issues. In fact, just such a discussion occurred in parliament shortly thereafter. The Saeima's human rights and public affairs committee announced its plans to propose the lifting of several professional restrictions applied to non-citizens, allowing for entrance into the fields of law, private investigation and pharmacy. (Baltic News Service Daily Report, 1700 GMT, 4 Nov 97).

In the face of all of this discussion, the State Human Rights Office has launched an examination into the situation regarding social rights and whether the government duly observes international obligations in this sphere. (Baltic News Service Daily Report, 1600 GMT, 8 Nov 97)

In neighboring Lithuania, a state-prepared report on the human rights situation--including the position of ethnic minorities--has been given a positive appraisal, according to the director of the foreign ministry's Legal Department, Darius Jurgelevicius. The report focused on such issues as equality of the sexes, domestic violence, capital punishment and prison conditions, and the legal position of individuals, political parties, public organizations and ethnic minorities. (Baltic News Service Daily Report, 1900 GMT, 5 Nov 97)

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