MEDIA

Free to make the right choice...

Russia's President Vladimir Putin has proclaimed once again his support for the freedom of the press: "The presence of a free press is without any doubt one of the main conditions of the preservation of democracy and freedom -- an indispensable condition." (INTERFAX, 0510 GMT, 1 Sep 01; FBIS-SOV-2001-0901, via World News Connection)

At the same time, presidential spokesman Sergei Yastrzhembsky declared that it is unacceptable for the media to grant space to Chechen rebel leaders. While it is "a matter of choice for editors or journalists," he believes "that not all of them make the correct choices," and for that reason "legislation must bring some regulation into the issue." In certain cases, he explained, the press ministry "should react to every such case. This is the only way to dissuade people from spreading the views of bandits and their leaders, especially when they are under criminal investigation." (INTERFAX, 0946 GMT, 31 Aug 01; FBIS-SOV-2001-0831, via World News Connection) Russian newspapers currently are allowed to publish only one interview with rebel leaders a year, and the Russian leadership appears to be moving to stop this as well.

These statements were made shortly after one of the few remaining genuinely independent newspapers, Novaya gazeta, published a large selection of materials from a forthcoming book, titled "The FSB Blows up Russia," co-written
by historian Yuri Fel'shtinsky and former Federal Security Service (FSB) Lieutenant Colonel Aleksandr Litvinenko. The book alleges that the Russian security service has carried out contract killings, committed terrorist acts, and been involved in various criminal activities. (See details in Caucasus section of The NIS Observed)

CABINET
...write the right books...
In addition to press restrictions, the government would also like more control over education. As the new school-year rolled around, Prime Minister Mikhail Kasyanov chaired several cabinet meetings in which, among other aspects of education, the creation of a new textbook on Russia's modern history was discussed. An open contest has been announced for the textbooks. No more than three textbooks for each grade -- all "in keeping with the national standard" - - will be approved by the government in time for the 2002-2003 academic year. (ITAR-TASS, 0956 GMT, 31 Aug 01; FBIS-SOV-2001-0831, via World News Connection)

Kasyanov suggested that textbook authors have not yet figured out the history of the past 10 years for themselves. In addition to the push for new material, upcoming education reforms will grant all schools federal status -- which will mean that expenses will be covered by regional, rather than municipal, budgets, giving the center more control and establishing tighter reins over the "transparency" of private education. (ORT, 29 Aug 01; via www.ortv.ru)

POLITICAL PARTIES
...choose the right successor...
On 3 September, Yevgeny Primakov stepped down from the leadership of the Fatherland-All Russia faction, recommending his first deputy, Vyacheslav Volodin, as a successor. The 37-year-old Volodin was elected unanimously by the faction's political council. Primakov explained that his resignation was not
motivated by political or ideological reasons, but rather by his recognition that, as the faction gets ready to become a party at its October congress, a high-ranking party member -- which he is not -- should lead the faction. Primakov added that he will remain a permanent member in the faction and an active Duma member. Journalists questioned whether Primakov, a former prime minister (and the force behind Soviet actions in the Middle East), had been offered a position in the executive branch, but Primakov answered that he had not. Furthermore, Primakov reported that the Russian president had asked him not to quit as faction head, but he had already made up his mind. (ITAR-TASS, 1429 GMT, 3 Sep 01; FBIS-SOV-2001-0903, via World News Connection, and ORT, 3 Sep 01; via www.ortv.ru)

...and undertake the right 'negotiations'
Perhaps the biggest splash on the political scene as State Duma deputies come back from their summer vacations was made by Union of Right Forces faction leader Boris Nemtsov's appeal for a cessation of military action in Chechnya and for negotiations with Aslan Maskhadov. Nemtsov has been campaigning for parliamentary negotiations with the separatists for a while now, and it seems that President Putin decided to issue an ultimatum: "As for State Duma Deputy Boris Nemtsov's suggestion regarding negotiations with citizen Maskhadov, I think that negotiations are always better than the use of force, and we are ready to speak with anyone, but on two conditions. First of all -- the necessary and indisputable recognition that the Russian Constitution applies throughout the territory of the Russian Federation, including Chechnya, which is a Russian region. Second -- the necessary and indisputable disarmament of all rebel formations and the surrender to the Russian court system of the most odious Chechen bandits, who are covered up to their elbows in the blood of the Russian people. If State Duma Deputy Nemtsov is able to guarantee the carrying out of these conditions within a reasonable time, let's say, within a month, he should do so. If not, then he needs to stop all the hustle and bustle on the political scene and give up the mandate of the State Duma Deputy." (ORT, 7 Sep 01; via www.ortv.ru)
Russian politicians responded immediately. Many hastened to agree with the president, some going further to say that Nemtsov's suggestion is "needless rubbish" (Viktor Kazantsev, presidential plenipotentiary to the Southern Federal District); that "in a civilized society, negotiating with criminals is unthinkable" (Frants Klintsevich, deputy head of the Unity faction); and that "Abetting criminals is punishable by criminal law. No matter what Nemtsov's game is, if he knows where these bandits are hiding, the General Prosecutor's office should indict him, and send the appropriate document to the Duma. And the deputies will gladly deprive such a deputy of immunity" (Gennady Raikov, head of the People's Deputy group). Supporters of the federal actions in Chechnya have also made a point of describing as "yet another piece of rubbish" statements that "the so-called Chechen armed forces are conducting successful operations against federal troops They have neither the means nor the forces for this." (INTERFAX, 0952 and 1552 GMT, 6 Sep 01; FBIS-SOV-2001-0906, via World News Connection)

Russian Federation: Security
By Fabian Adami

Serious allegations point to extent of FSB power and its support
Lieutenant Colonel Aleksandr Litvinenko, a former FSB officer fled to Britain last year, requesting political asylum, a status granted in May 2001. Since his arrival in the United Kingdom, Litvinenko has made serious allegations against his former employers, which are to be published later this year in a book co-authored with Yuri Fel'shtinsky. Excerpts from the book were printed late in August in Novaya gazeta, one of the diminishing number of genuinely independent Russian newspapers.
Preliminary titled "The FSB Blows up Russia," the book alleges that the apartment bombings of 1999 in Moscow were not, in fact, the work of Chechen terrorists. Rather, they were carried out by the FSB acting at Putin's behest, in order to provide a convenient pretext for the launching of the renewed war against Chechnya. (for details see Caucasus section of The NIS Observed)

While it should be stated that no material evidence has been offered supporting the allegations, several former senior KGB and FSB officers, including the prominent KGB defector Oleg Gordievsky and the retired KGB Lieutenant Colonel Kostantin Preobrazhensky, have said that what Litvinenko wrote is "100 percent true." (THE MOSCOW TIMES, 28 Aug 01; The Independent Press, via ISI Emerging Markets Database)

In the weeks since the Novaya gazeta piece, further articles have provided data concerning the extent to which the FSB disregards constitutional laws and provisions in the pursuit of its aims. Of most concern are the procedures, or lack thereof, and the secrecy enveloping the ever-growing number of "spy" trials occurring in Russia.

Grigory Pasko, a Russian naval officer, who was himself arrested on charges of treason and espionage, (and later acquitted) provides an inside perspective of violations by the FSB.

According to Article 275 of the Russian Criminal Code, dealing with treason and espionage, the prosecution must prove "That a foreign organization in the given case was involved, and that these activities were designed to damage Russia's national security." (NOVAYA GAZETA, 31 Aug 01; Russian Political Monitor, via ISI Emerging Markets Database.) Furthermore, Article 18 of the Criminal-Procedural Code specifically requires such trials to be open, unless state secrets need to be protected. In that case, the prosecutors and judges then are required to establish the nature of the damage and its severity. Only when
both of these requirements have been fulfilled may the judges proceed to hold a closed trial.

Pasko argues that judges are circumventing the law because such trials really are political phenomena. Pasko argues that secrecy is imposed on "spy" trials so that FSB violations can be kept out of the public eye. Predictably, the FSB's reaction has been to deny all allegations levied against it, and to release a statement describing Novaya gazeta's serialization of Litvinenko's book as "gutter press." (RUSSIA TODAY, 30 Aug 01; via European Internet) Novaya gazeta's editor, Dmitry Muratov, has appealed to the Duma to launch an independent inquiry into all of the allegations against the FSB.

Of course, if the FSB, as assumed, is acting directly on the orders (or, at least, with the knowledge) of President Putin, such an inquiry would be pointless. It follows that the Russian leadership no longer cares how blatant the FSB has become, and this carries a whiff of a police state.

Newly Independent States: Western Region
By Tammy Lynch

UKRAINE
Yushchenko stagnant...
Since his dismissal from office in April of this year, former Prime Minister Viktor Yushchenko has been attempting to create a "unifying" coalition to fight for "transparent politics and a non-criminal economy and democracy."
(WASHINGTON POST, 29 Apr 01; via lexis-nexis) The proposed coalition has garnered a great deal of attention based on Yushchenko's past success and present popularity and has been viewed by many as the only political entity capable of dealing with Ukraine's biggest challenges -- cronyism, censorship and justice that can be bought or bullied. This faith in Yushchenko's election bloc,
however, seems to have been much exaggerated: Ukraine's politicians for the most part have rejected Yushchenko's ideas and have clung to old centers of oligarchic power. The former prime minister, therefore, remains the captain of a very small boat.

On 8 September, Yushchenko trumpeted his first two "Our Ukraine" coalition members -- the two Rukh parties (Ukrainian Peoples' Rukh and People's Rukh of Ukraine). The groups, which are attempting to reunite, announced, "The idea and direction of the reforms that Yushchenko succeeded in implementing to a significant extent are the basis of the Rukh ideology." (UKRAINIAN NEWS, 8 Sep 01; via ISI Emerging Markets Database) While undoubtedly true, the testimony likely will do little to help Yushchenko either build his coalition or gather votes in the 2002 parliamentary elections. In fact, the announcement of the Rukhs as the first members of the coalition signals trouble ahead for the bloc; the once large and powerful Rukh party has declined into two small and weak parties with little influence outside of the Galicia region. Yushchenko earlier was thought to be able to bridge the Western-Eastern Ukraine political barrier. It now appears that he has been unable to do so. His announcement of support from parties based in Western Ukraine only serves to demonstrate his inability to lock in the support of the more powerful parties based in the east.

Many of those eastern parties are already involved in "unification" talks in advance of the election; none of these parties has mentioned Yushchenko. Instead, most parties look as if they will participate in election blocs associated with oligarchs Oleksandr Volkov and Viktor Pinchuk, as well as a brand new bloc led by Mykola Azarov, the head of the state tax administration. The tried-and-true method of congregating around a perceived center of power continues. As Den wrote a short time ago, "In the unstable Ukrainian business environment, every MP with business interests and connections would be motivated to get 'under the roof' of a key power-broker in the field...." (DEN, 22 Mar 01; cited in Political
Reviews, 27 Mar 01, via ISI Emerging Markets Database) Unfortunately for Ukraine, that translates into more of the same after the elections of 2002.

...While Kuchma keeps on ticking
Unlike Viktor Yushchenko, President Leonid Kuchma seems to be reconstituting much of his power base. In the last week, he completed his restructuring of the government -- dismissing a few Yushchenko holdovers and reshuffling other personnel. In all, the president announced over a dozen staffing changes. The new organizational structure now includes "state secretaries," who will oversee all ministries but be subordinate to the president instead of to the prime minister. Whereas the prime minister's cabinet previously was able to act as a counterweight to Kuchma's power, it now seems to be little more than an extension of his will. Therefore, while Kuchma rival Yushchenko so far has been unable to solidify his position in preparation for the upcoming elections, Kuchma seems well prepared to influence events as he sees fit.

BELARUS
In the eastern corner, the winner... Vladimir Putin?
Alyaksandr Lukashenka had better start saving now, because he owes Vladimir Putin a very big present. On 10 September, when the Belarusian Central Election Commission ended the suspense by announcing that Lukashenka had won the election, the president had more than interesting vote-counting techniques to thank for the outcome. Without a doubt, Lukashenka benefited immensely from President Putin's refusal to criticize him and from an uninterrupted flow of Russian handouts into his impoverished country. Had these two factors been different, it is very likely that Belarus would have a new president today.

At a time when every Western country had withdrawn its support from Lukashenka, Vladimir Putin constituted a lifeline. Although Putin's support was not as glowing as Lukashenka would have liked, Putin's lukewarm endorsements allowed the Belarusian leader to claim Russian support -- a factor important in a
country that heavily values its ties to Russia. Even more importantly, Putin's decision to continue subsidies in several areas allowed Lukashenka to stave off the worst effects of his Soviet-style economic policy.

Just over one month ago, on 2 August, Putin held a lengthy meeting with Lukashenka, announcing that "Alyaksandr Lukashenka is defending the interests of his country's economy," and suggesting, "The fact that Alyaksandr Ryhoravich is in my home tells you about the level of our relations." (ITAR-TASS, 2234 GMT, 2 Aug 01; FBIS-SOV-2001-0803, and Interfax, 1923 GMT, 2 Aug 01; FBIS-SOV-2001-0802, via World News Connection) Around the same time, Putin reiterated his pledge to grant Belarus up to $70 million to support the country's failing currency, and confirmed that Belarus needn't worry about debts to its neighbor. Altogether, Minsk economist Alexandr Sosnov recently estimated that "Russian financial help to Belarus varies between $1 billion and $2 billion a year." (MOSCOW TIMES, 5 Sep 01; via lexis-nexis) No monetary value, however, could be placed on the repeated airing of Putin's supportive statements on Belarusian television as the election approached.

This support came amid allegations -- said to be "credible" by the US State Department -- of "death squads" reportedly run by the secret police in order to eliminate Lukashenka's biggest rivals. These squads, according to recent Belarusian defectors from the prosecutor's office, have been responsible for the disappearances of over 30 persons opposing Lukashenka. (See THE NIS OBSERVED, 2 Aug 01, for further background.)

Following the release of this information, human rights organizations throughout the world called on Putin to withdraw his support for his Belarusian counterpart. But, Lukashenka's offer to share borders and airspace was simply too much to pass up. Consequently, on 10 September, Putin became the first world leader to congratulate Lukashenka on his victory, noting that he hoped to "further deepen
all-round cooperation and contacts at all levels." (PUTIN STATEMENT TO THE PRESS, 10 Sep 01; via www.charter97.org)

At roughly the same time that Putin's statement was released, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), Council of Europe and European Parliament announced that "the 2001 presidential election process failed to meet the OSCE commitments for democratic elections formulated in the 1990 Copenhagen Document and Council of Europe standards." (ELECTION OBSERVATION MISSION STATEMENT OF PRELIMINARY FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS, 10 Sep 01) In particular, the election monitors criticized "a campaign of intimidation directed against opposition activists, domestic observation organizations, opposition and independent media, and a smear campaign against international observers." Russian officials, as might be expected, have had no comment on these accusations.

And very likely, they never will. Despite the problems that exist in Belarus today, Vladimir Putin’s pragmatism continues to prevail. With Belarus, his country borders NATO. Without it, he views himself as militarily disadvantaged. Therefore, given the opportunity either to push Belarus toward democracy by unseating an ally or help an autocrat remain in power, for him, the choice was simple. For Lukashenka, the choice was no less than an election-saver.

Newly Independent States: Caucasus
By Miriam Lanskoy

CHECHNYA
Spetz instructions: Eat this text
Nearly three weeks ago Novaya gazeta published fragments of a forthcoming book by Aleksandr Litvinenko, a former FSB agent now living in England, and Yuri Fel'shtinsky, an émigré historian, who chronicle in detail various criminal
activities by the FSB since 1994. Novaya gazeta titled its 27 August spetz-vypusk (special edition) "FSB Blows up Russia." "We are asking those with weak nervous systems not to read this. And those who do read it should then eat it," quipped the Novaya gazeta editors in the introduction.

Novaya gazeta calls on the Russian legislature to form an independent commission to investigate the charges put forth by Litvinenko and Fel'shtinsky. The publication contains very controversial information, some of which has been documented in other sources, while other data are entirely new. (As is widely known, the second Russian-Chechen war began shortly after a series of bombings in Russian cities. The first Moscow bombing occurred on September 9, 1999 and the second on September 13, 1999. [Precisely in between those days, falls September 11, a Soviet holiday commemorating the birthday of Feliz Dzherzhinsky, founder of the Cheka, the precursor of the KGB, who is still a revered figure among the Russian Security Services.] However, Litvinenko and Fel'shtinsky are the first to emphasize the terrorist incidents that accompanied the beginning of the first war in 1994. Their argument, that the security structures have followed a policy of framing the Chechens for terrorist acts consistently since 1994 is new and virtually unexamined.)

The text raises vital questions and requires scrutiny. Yet this explosive material has received barely a mention in the English-language press (nor has it been translated by FBIS or BBC Worldwide Monitoring). What follows is an attempt to plug this gaping void by summarizing the most important disclosures, particularly as they relate to the war in Chechnya.

**Chapter 1: "Security services ignite the Chechen war"

The security services needed to prepare public opinion for the first war in Chechnya. "Knowing that Russian forces and the forces of the anti-Dudaev opposition would start the storming of Grozny any day now, the FSK (Federal Counterintelligence Service, the precursor to the FSB) on 18 November 1994
made its first known attempt to stage an act of terrorism in Moscow and blame it on the Chechens to enflame anti-Chechen sentiments," the book charges; in other words, on 18 November there was an explosion on a railway bridge in Moscow. The explosives were laid by Andrei Shelenkov, whose body was found on the scene and who had been an employee of the company Lanako, which was headed by an FSB agent, Maksim Yur’evich Lazovsky. A truck packed with explosives was found near the company offices.

A tank column ostensibly composed of the anti-Dudaev opposition was sent against Grozny on 26 November 1994. It was clear from the outset that the assault would be a fiasco. "Those who planned a military intervention in Chechnya needed that column to be destroyed by the Chechens. Only in this way could they provoke Yel’tsin to start a full scale war against Dudaev," the article reports. The tank crews composed of Russian servicemen were taken prisoner and shown on television.

The party of war was led by the head of the Presidential Security Services Aleksandr Korzhakov and Chief of Main Guard Directorate Michael Barsukov and Deputy Prime Minister Oleg Soskovets. These individuals extorted millions from Dudaev starting in 1992 in exchange for allowing stocks of weapons to remain in Chechnya. Had Dudaev been granted the personal interview with Yel’tsin which he assiduously sought, he might have revealed these facts to the Russian president. The threesome made sure a meeting would not occur.

On 13 December 1994 Soskovets said that Chechens living in Moscow and other parts of Russia should not be regarded as potential terrorists or be subjected to official discrimination. This was a rather bizarre statement: "The idea of regarding the Chechen diaspora as potential terrorists had not even come to mind. There had been no terrorist attacks" (the bridge bombing did not cause casualties) and the war had barely begun. Soskovets was stoking fears, not calming them.
Chapter 2: "Dance of the Security Services"

Lazovsky's group carried out two more bombings in Moscow on 23 December and 27 December 1994, the authors say. Lazovsky had worked not only for the FSB but also for the Foreign Intelligence Service (SVR). His mentor there was Petr Yevgenivich Suslov, who specialized in extrajudicial execution and recruited for this purpose members of the First Main Directorate of the KGB special forces division, known as "Vympel."

In 1995 Dudaev paid several million dollars to Russian authorities for a cease-fire proclamation. When this did not occur, Dudaev ordered Shamil Basaev to obtain either a return of the bribe or a cease-fire. This was the genesis of Basaev's hostage-taking operation in Budennovsk in July 1995 -- which indeed did result in a cease-fire.

After the Budennovsk incident, special operational groups were formed to assassinate Dudaev and Basaev. Dudaev was assassinated in 1996. The authors are sure that Basaev will meet a similar fate. "He will not be taken alive. He knows too much. Russian leaders do not need his testimony."

Chapter 3: "MUR vs. FSB"

In 1996 an MVD investigator in the 12th department of the Moscow Criminal Investigations (MUR) Directorate which specialized in solving contract murders, Vladimir Il'ich Tskhai, took up cases against the FSB including the Lazovsky group. Tskhai personally arrested Lazovsky for murder, drugs, counterfeiting FSB identification and having unregistered weapons. The authors give a detailed and highly complex account of the cover-up within the FSB which protected its agents from scrutiny by the police and the Russian Duma. Tskhai's crusade against the FSB ended when he died ostensibly of liver cirrhosis, which the authors charge was brought about by poisoning.
The next series of terrorist bombings occurred in Moscow in June and July 1996 and was meant to set public opinion against peace talks with Chechen leaders. This time a series of three blasts killed four and wounded 40 people, but failed to derail the talks. Who among FSB personnel carried out those bombings is not known; Lazovsky was in jail until 1998, but members of his group were at large.

Chapter 4: "FSB's failure in Ryazan"

This chapter is the most comprehensive account available of the infamous incident in Ryazan of 22-23 September 1999. The bomb in Ryazan would have gone off at 5:30 a.m. on 23 September - just as the Russian air force started bombing Grozny's airport.

A tenant of a Ryazan apartment building alerted the local police that he saw sacks being placed in the basement of the building. The investigators discovered and disarmed a bomb and evacuated the building. On 23 September national and local representatives of the security services, Prime Minister Vladimir Putin, Moscow Mayor Yuri Luzhkov and others congratulated themselves and the Ryazan public on having averted an act of terrorism. But on 24 September FSB Minister Patrushev abruptly announced that it had all been an elaborate training exercise. Why the sudden change of tune? "First of all, the main evidence, the three bags with explosives and the detonator had been delivered to Moscow, into Patrushev's hands. This was good news for Patrushev. Now it was possible to substitute other sacks and contend that the Ryazan provincials made a mistake and their expert analysis yielded the wrong results. The second piece of news was bad. The Ryazan FSB had arrested two terrorists," the authors explain. (The first series of tests carried out in Ryazan established the presence of the explosive hexogen used in previous bombings in Moscow and Volgadonsk.)

After the bomb scare, Ryazan went into a state of heightened alert. There were extra patrols in the streets, all roads into the city were blocked and all cars were being searched. The entire city was on the lookout for the description of the
bombers whom the tenants had seen. They were three persons, two men and a woman in a car with a taped up license plate. An employee of the Ektrosvyaz telecom, Nadezhda Yukhanova, happened to overhear a suspicious call from Ryazan to Moscow. The voice in Moscow said "each should leave separately, there are roadblocks everywhere." Yukhanova alerted the Ryazan FSB immediately. The agents were certain they had found the suspects. The difficulty arose when they identified the Moscow phone number: "This was the number of one of the offices of the FSB," the article says.

According to the press release of the Ryazan FSB: "As has became known the placement of the imitation explosive device that was discovered on Sep 22, 1999 was part of an inter-regional training exercise. This announcement was a surprise for us and came at precisely the moment that the regional directorate of the FSB had discovered the addresses within the city of Ryazan of the persons who were connected with the placement of an explosive device and was getting ready to arrest them." In fact those persons were detained and transferred to the FSB agents from Moscow who came to collect them.

The exercise in Ryazan was the last in a series of such training, said Patrushev on 24 September. Indeed, the sudden rash of four bombings in residential buildings ended with that episode.

Chapter 5: "FSB Against the People"
This chapter focuses on the FSB efforts to suppress incriminating information. On October 4, 1999 3 GRU officers, colonel Zuriko Ivanov, Major Viktor Pakhomov, and senior lieutenant Aleksei Galkin, went missing in the Nadterechnyi district of Chechnya. On October 19, 1999 the press spokesman of the Chechen armed forces Vakha Ibragimov announced that the GRU officers had initiated contacts with the Chechens and had come to the Chechens on their own initiative. According to Ibragimov the agents were ready to offer information about bombings in Moscow, Buinansksk, and Volgadosnsk. A Turkish journalist,
Sedat Aral, brought a video-taped statement by Galkin out of Grozny in January 2000. On the tape, Galkin says that the bombings were the work of the FSB and GRU. Abu Movsaev, the Chechen commander who questioned Galkin on the tape, was sought in Chechnya by GRU but protected by the FSB. "The case went all the way to Moscow which decided to take Movsaev, but he was not taken alive."

The next bombing occurred on August 8 2000 in Pushkin Square in Moscow. This was organized by two FSB cadres whose "cover papers" identify them as Major Izmailov and Captain Fedorov. "On the 5th of August members of the spetz-group of Andrei Alexanrovich Morev ... witnessed a conversation between Izmailov and Fedorov about work in Pushkin Square. Three days later the terrorist act happened there and Morev identified 2 FSB officers in the photo-reports."

In March 2000, Yabloko Duma Deputies Sergei Ivanenko and Yuri Schekochikhin, initiated legislation to create an independent commission to look into specific unanswered questions pertaining to the Ryazan incidents. The motion failed twice, with the entire Unity faction voting against it (whereas some deputies from the Communists and Fatherland-All Russia crossed over to Yabloko, The Agro-Industrial Group and People’s Deputy, which solidly supported the motion.)

NTV’s expose about the Ryazan events (described in chapter 4) were the genesis of its problems with the FSB. The authors quote liberal Duma Deputy, Boris Nemtsov who anticipates on March 26 that NTV will have serious problems with the authorities as a result of that program. Indeed the first raid against Media Most came only a few weeks later.

NTV filmed its "Ryazan Sugar" program on March 20, 2000 and it aired on March 24. The program brought together tenants from the building, FSB officials, and
other experts. "Appearing without masks and weapons, the FSB clearly lost the battle against the population." The glaring contradictions and inconsistencies made an outright mockery of the official story about training exercises. First, the law governing operational exercises, to which the FSB spokesmen pointed in their statements explicitly forbids involving civilians. Second, the FSB admitted that it did not have observers on the scene. The performance of the local officials can not be evaluated unless there are observers. Third, the initial criminal case was opened under the terrorism charge. It was closed in October, but reopened again on December 2, 1999. The FSB closed the case on March 21, only after the taping where tenants and human rights activists hammered away at this embarrassing detail - but before the program was aired.

The tenants attempted to sue the FSB for psychological trauma but were told that only the person who gave the order can be served a summons. That person has never been identified. Generals "Zhdanovich (FSB spokesman) and Sergeev (Ryazan region FSB head) were asked six times: who gave the order to hold this training in Ryazan? Each time they evaded the question ..."

"How FSB controlled non-cadre groups were created"

In this chapter, the authors say that several criminal gangs have close ties to Russian security services, FSB or GRU. They note that "non-cadre groups", composed of persons not officially on the FSB payroll, were being created as early as the 1980s and that presently Russia has up to 30 security agencies. The Larionov gang in Primorie openly recruited members from the Pacific Fleet. In Samara, one of the leading criminal groupings was headed by Aleksandr Litvinki, who was arrested in connection with a shooting of several mafia bosses. After Litvinki was released without being charged, the other criminal elements in Samara came to regard him as an agent of the Security Services. In the Kurgan the gang under Aleksandr Solonik was composed of former and acting security agents. Another criminal ring, the Russian Fund for Afghan Veterans was run by a GRU colonel Valery Radchikov.
Chapter 6: "FSB organizes contract killings"
According to the authors, many contract killings of businessmen were ordered or executed by the gangs mentioned above and other groups working with the FSB. The most significant contract killing mentioned is that of St. Petersburg Duma Deputy and head of Russia's Democratic Choice faction, Galina Starovoitova. The gun used to kill Starovoitova was found at the crime scene. However the gun that was used to wound her assistant, Ruslan Linkov, turned up in Latvia in the possession of a former Riga OMON officer, Konstantin Nikulin.

Chapter 7: "Security Services and hostage-taking"
Arbi Baraev is considered responsible for virtually all the famous hostage taking incidents: NTV and ORT journalists, RF president's representative to Chechnya, Valentin Vlasov, the killings of the Red Cross workers and three English and New Zealander telecom workers. Litvinenko and Fel'shtinski cite many varied sources ranging from Ruslan Usupov, a Chechen FSB officer, to Ingush President Ruslan Aushev, and to Duma Deputy Sergei Kovalev who agree that Baraev had FSB protection. Baraev lived at home in Alkhan-Kala and drove his own car anywhere in the republic. According to Aushev, on 6 June 2000 Baraev's men attacked a column of federal troops in Ingushetia. In August 2000, Baraev paid a visit to Moscow where he met Russian officials including, the authors hint, Presidential Chief of Staff Alexandr Voloshin. Baraev was killed in Chechnya in June 2001, but this was not the result of some spetz-operation as the Russian government has claimed. According to Aslanbek Aslakhanov, the Duma deputy from Chechnya, Baraev was killed by "krovniki" -- Chechens who had a blood feud against him.

NIS Observed comment
In Chapter 5 the authors characterize the audience and the tenants at the NTV taping as the voice of the people - the voice that was not afraid to speak out against the stories manufactured by the FSB. A key voice on that program, (the
one that asked whether the FSB had observers on the scene) belonged to Viktor Lozinksy, a Memorial human rights activists from Ryazan. Lozinksy's efforts to persuade the tenants to appear and his ability to serve as a link to the Moscow democratic movement made that show possible. After the taping, he became a victim of unceasing FSB threats and harassment, which eventually forced him to flee Russia for Boston where he applied for political asylum. (While Litvinenko received political asylum in England expeditiously, Viktor Lozinksy has been waiting for over a year for his first interview with the INS. )

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