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EDITORIAL PRINCIPLES

The Central Asia-Caucasus Analyst is an English language global Web journal devoted to analysis of the current issues facing the Central Asia-Caucasus region. It serves to link the business, governmental, journalistic and scholarly communities and is the global voice of the Central Asia-Caucasus Institute, The Johns Hopkins University-The Nitze School of Advanced International Studies. The Editor of the Analyst solicits most articles and field reports however authors may suggest topics for future issues or submit articles and field reports for consideration. Such articles and field reports cannot have been previously published in any form, must be written in English, and must correspond precisely to the format and style of articles and field reports published in The Analyst (www.cacianalyst.org) and described below.

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Analytical articles require a three to four sentence introduction to the article based on a news hook. Rather than a general, overarching analysis, the article must offer considered and careful judgment supported with concrete examples.

Analytical article structure: Ideal length between 1000 and 1200 words.

KEY ISSUE: A short 100-word statement of your conclusions about the issue or news event on which the article focuses.

BACKGROUND: 300-400 words of analysis about what has led up to the event or issue and why this issue is critical to the region. Include background information about the views and experiences of the local population.

IMPLICATIONS: 300-400 words of analysis of the ramifications of this event or issue, including where applicable, implications for the local people's future.

CONCLUSIONS: 100-200 words that strongly state your conclusions about the impact of the event or issue.

Specifications for Field Reports:

Field Reports focus on a particular news event and what local people think about the event, or about the work of an NGO. Field Reports address the implications the event or activity analyzed has for peoples' lives and their communities. Field Reports do not have the rigid structure of Analytical Articles, and are shorter in length, averaging ca. 700-800 words.

Those interested in joining The Analyst's pool of authors to contribute articles, field reports, or contacts of potential writers, please send your CV to: scornell@jhu.edu and suggest some topics on which you would like to write.

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FROM GROZNY TO NALCHIK: IS THE NORTH CAUCASUS HEADING BACK TO THE NINETEENTH CENTURY?

Murad Batal al-Shishani

The attack on October 13 on governmental facilities and buildings in Nalchik, capital of Russias Kabardino-Balkaria Republic by fighters who came from Chechnya was, surprisingly, the largest Chechen operation outside the boundaries of the Republic or in the North Caucasus since the assassination of Chechen president, Aslan Maskhadov. The attack raised questions about the changes in North Caucasus whether there is in fact a domino effect from Chechnya in North Caucasus. In fact, the steep increase of military operations outside Chechnya raises fears that the North Caucasus may be gradually engulfed in a regional war reminiscent of the nineteenth century.

BACKGROUND: The “Domino Effect” was a key Russian concern over Chechen calls for independence, or separation as dubbed by Russia, since the collapse of the Soviet Union and the ensuing beginning of the Russo-Chechen war in 1994. Russia’s concern was that the Chechen model would be replicated all over the North Caucasus, causing Russia lose one of the strategic areas under its control. However, this did not happen. The areas in the North Caucasus near Chechnya remained peaceful and did not get involved in the conflict, as had been the case in the first Caucasian wars in the nineteenth century.

But the Nalchik attacks comes in a different context, the circumstances created in the aftermath of the Russian forces’ announcement of having assassinating Chechnya’s legitimate and moderate president, Aslan Maskhadov, on March 9 of this year. His assassination was a significant addition to Russia’s series of mistakes in the North Caucasus. Maskhadov was a key player in the genuine peace-building efforts between Chechnya and Russia that aimed at putting an end to conflict. He was also the major factor in hindering the scope of the operations of the fundamentalist arm of the resistance movement from expanding outside Chechnya. In spite of questions regarding the legitimacy of his leadership, his influence on both sides of the Chechen resistance, fundamentalist and moderate, became clear when he announced a ceasefire before his assassination that was followed by all forces.

Since Maskhadov’s assassination, resistance operations have increased and spread, whether in Chechnya or other nearby North Caucasian areas, particularly Ingushetia and Dagestan. The Circassian-dominated northwestern Caucasus (Karachay-Cherkessia, Adygeia, and Kabardino-Balkaria) suffered increasing tension as hardliners throughout the region started to fill the void that Maskhadov’s assassination had left. The Chechen mark is seen in many of the operations taking place in the North Caucasus, such as those led by the “Islamic Military Council” in Dagestan. Most members of this group are former fighters in Chechnya, and their commanders are still there. The group’s commander, Rabbani Khalikov, is close to the Chechen field commander, Shamil Basayev, and had previously pledged allegiance to Maskhadov. Khalikov’s group’s operations have increased in Dagestan since the assassination of Maskhadov.

IMPLICATIONS: In a quantitative analysis of military operations in the North Caucasus (including Chechnya) undertaken by this author in the aftermath of Maskhadov’s assassination (March 9 – October 13, 2005) it is evident that the situation in Dagestan has come to rival that in Chechnya. 42 out of 102 operations (i.e. 41 per cent) were in Dagestan, whereas 51 per cent were in Chechnya. This indicates that there is mounting tension outside Chechnya – as the hardliners had promised. On average, there were over 12 operations a month, meaning roughly six in Chechnya, 5 in Dagestan, and one in Ingushetia.

An analysis of the “objectives” of these operations indicates that apart from the Chechen factor, are internal factors are at work as well, intensifying armed resistance and contributing to its diffusion and spread. The share of attacks on Russian army units was almost 40 per cent; corresponding figures for local police and Interior Ministry forces was 33 per cent, for local ministers and government officials 10 per cent, and the remaining 17.6 per cent was distributed among different targets, such as trains and infrastructure facilities.

This increase in local targets indicates that Chechnya is not the sole factor impacting the mounting violence in the North Caucasus. There are other local and internal factors at play in the region. For instance, 55% of the operations in Dagestan took place in the capital, Makhachkala, and not in Khasavyurt, which is on the border with Chechnya and where a large number of Chechens live. The North Caucasus is witnessing increasing frustration and disillusionment with local elite that are deeply associated with corruption. In addition, there is an increasingly negative view of the center, Moscow. This dissatisfaction has especially increased since Russian President Vladimir Putin announced that regional rulers will be appointed, not elected. Moreover, unemployment and poverty rates in some North Caucasian Republics have skyrocketed to ca. 80%, with the average income for the regular person half the average of Russians in general. As a matter of fact, Putin’s envoy to the region, Dimitri Kozak, warned about this in a report in which he focused on socioeconomic problems in the region and overlooked the issue of human rights.

Put together, these factors have created increasing numbers of radicalized and disillusioned Islamist youth, whether in Dagestan, Ingushetia or the Northwestern Republics. Frustration is widespread, with surveys showing a significant proportion of respondents expect little or no change to take place. Surveys have also recorded high levels of discontentment and disillusionment with the ruling elite. Most importantly, there are increasing numbers of people ready to go into a confrontation with the local governments in republics that have been generally peaceful ever since the collapse of the Soviet Union. In a recent survey, 21 per cent of

respondents in Karachay-Cherkessia said they were prepared to confront the government and 14 per cent answered “possibly”. In Kabardino-Balkaria, 15 per cent answered “yes”, and 8 per cent “possibly”, testifying to the mounting frustration in the North Caucasus.

CONCLUSIONS: Although the Nalchik raid was clearly the largest operation outside Chechnya since Maskhadov’s assassination, it is not the only one. On the contrary, it took place in the general context created by the Russian strategy and policy. It would also seem that the connection between frustration and increasing religious and nationalist trends pushes for a replica of the nineteenth-century Caucasian war. This is exemplified, for instance, by tensions in the Adygeia Republic between people of Russian (65%) and Circassian ethnicity over erecting a statue for the Christian Saint St. Nicholas, the miracle worker. It has been noted that protesters were using words from the Russian occupation and Caucasian resistance period in the nineteenth century. It is also evident by the decision by rebel armed forces to rename the Dagestan capital, Makhachkala, to Shamilkala after Imam Shamil, the nineteenth-century legendary leader of the joint Chechen-Dagestani resistance and a symbolic figure in Caucasian history. This indicated that North Caucasians are restoring historic trends including religious or regionalist ideologies contrary to the state of affairs that followed the downfall of the Soviet Union and the increasing nativization trends that undermined calls for unity.

It is therefore clear that through its policies, Russia has created a burgeoning crisis for itself in the North Caucasus, and that a North Caucasian radical Islamic movement could turn the Russian South into a tense area that can contribute to restructuring Eurasia’s geopolitical map – unless Russia realizes that its mistake began, remains, and has to be addressed in Chechnya, but in a different way than it has done so far.

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RUSSIA OUT OF PEACEKEEPING? GEORGIA CHALLENGES THE STATUS QUO

Khatuna Salukvadze

Georgia seems to have launched what it sees as the master plan to restore the country's territorial integrity. The Georgian parliament set an ultimatum for Russia either to fulfill its role of an unbiased mediator in the two breakaway regions of Abkhazia and South Ossetia or to withdraw its peacekeepers stationed in the conflict zones in the first half of next year. By saying no to the current Russian-led peacekeeping format of mediation and negotiating, Georgia is looking to replace the existing security regime for Abkhaz and South Ossetian residents. But without the help of multilateral negotiation frameworks and incentives for cooperation, Georgia could fail to create a sufficient gravitation pull for rapprochement.

BACKGROUND: On October 11, the Georgian Parliament unanimously passed a resolution instructing the government to take measures for the withdrawal of Russian peacekeeping forces from the South Ossetian and Abkhazian conflict zones if their performance in South Ossetia and Abkhazia does not improve before February and July, 2006, respectively.

Since the early 1990s, the Abkhazia and South Ossetia peace processes have been mediated by Russian peacekeepers deployed in both breakaway regions. In reality, the contingents stationed in the conflict zones have been used by Russia to consolidate its effective control over the regions rather than to fulfill the core functions stipulated by the peacekeeping mandate, such as preventing the militarization and the formation of illegal armed groups. The granting of Russian citizenship to a large number of Abkhazian and South Ossetian residents, the acquisition of the assets and properties of Georgian refugees, the arming and training of secessionist forces, and the sponsoring of their military exercises are listed as a basis for Georgia's distrust of Russia's role. Only last month, Russian peacekeepers turned a blind eye to a military parade in South Ossetia, staged as the unrecognized republic's independence day.

In a strongly-worded resolution, the Georgian Parliament holds Russia responsible for keeping the status quo of frozen conflicts and strengthening the

separatist regimes in return of their de facto incorporation into Russia, and instructs the government to undertake appropriate measures for the rapid withdrawal of Russian peacekeeping forces from the territory of Georgia if no progress is reached by the deadline.

Georgian president Mikheil Saakashvili made clear that he shares the indictment of the legislature. Saakashvili reiterated that Georgia is committed to a peaceful resolution to the conflict, but argued that Russia must take responsibility for its own role. "This is not a Georgian-Ossetian problem, it is a Georgian-Russian issue," he said in a nationally televised speech. "Russia is doing everything in its power to maintain this status quo; Georgia will no longer put up with the freeze on the negotiating process."

Georgian authorities caution Moscow that the presence of its peacekeepers would officially be declared illegal by Georgia unless Russia agrees to the corrective changes in the current negotiating framework: establishing a new format for peace talks, altering current peacekeeping practices in the conflict zones; and stopping shipments of arms and supplies to the separatist territories. At the same time, Georgian State Minister for Conflict Resolution Issues Giorgi Khaindrava stated that it is necessary to increase the role of the international community in peacekeeping and that the issue of

U.S. participation in the normalization of the conflicts on Georgian territory is also on the agenda. Meanwhile, Russian Defense Minister Sergei Ivanov declared that Moscow would pull its troops out of the two territories only if Abkhaz and South Ossetian leaders called on Russia to do so. Abkhazia and South Ossetia have also opposed to any changes to the existing negotiating frameworks.

IMPLICATIONS: Since its installation in the office, Saakashvili's administration made no secret about its willingness to defrost the conflicts. Initial, rather spontaneous decisions that led to armed clashes in South Ossetia last August were followed by Georgia's peace plan economic projects for the secessionist regions. But so far, the reaction from Sukhumi and Tskhinvali to Tbilisi's peace proposal has showed that the years of animosity are hard to reverse. Abkhaz and Ossetian officials remain suspicious of Georgian potential plans of military solutions to the conflicts, and in the absence of other gravitational forces to support their economic recovery, welcome continued Russian patronage.

The current low level of Georgian-Russian relations is not without precedent. Only months ago, the long running Russian-Georgian dispute over the fate of Russian military bases in Georgia was heightened and the talks also seemed deadlocked as Russian officials balked at even the hypothetical perspective of withdrawing bases. Nevertheless, Tbilisi succeeded in persuading Russia to withdraw. Notably, Georgia's tough stance on Russian peacekeeping seems to be emboldened by this breakthrough in the reduction of Moscow's geopolitical influence in the Caucasus.

Moscow may have agreed to the Georgian terms of the bases withdrawal. However, when it comes to the current row, the stakes are much higher: Russia has made a huge commitment to the separatist regions, and its patronage of Abkhazia and South Ossetia is now deeply embedded in the strategy of Russia's top political leadership. A total collapse in Georgian-Russian relations would be damaging for Georgia, as it is much too early to gauge how far the Russian authorities will go in embracing provocative maneuvers, as Russia could opt to

utilize its political allies in Abkhazia and South Ossetia to exert pressure on Tbilisi. Yet President Vladimir Putin has publicly declared that it is Russia's state policy to respect the territorial integrity of Georgia. When it comes to nudge from West and the U.S., Putin may be inclined to stand up to his hardliner subordinates, and have seek a deal with Washington providing Russia with assistance in dealing with the many challenges throughout the Caucasus region.

At the same time, the small if existing area of productivity for current Russian-Georgian relations may be maximized with Tbilisi's consistent approach in dissuading Russia from providing an insurance policy for the region's separatist leadership. Giving Russia a realistic period of time for correcting its peacekeeping instead of requesting an immediate withdrawal signals that official Tbilisi may have a pragmatic action plan.

Under these circumstances, transparent and effective international mediation is crucial. While Georgian officials admit that the settlement of the conflicts is practically impossible without Russia's participation, Tbilisi seeks the internationalization of the negotiating process as a powerful tool for reaching a political solution. Georgia's call for intensifying the multilateral negotiating format appeals not only to the OSCE and European bodies, but to the informal groupings of the "Baltic-Black Sea Axis" and the "Democratic Choice" initiative (Ukraine, Georgia, Poland and Lithuania), with the possibility of Latvian and Ukrainian participation in peacekeeping, as voiced by the Ukrainian and Latvian presidents.

Yet the EU's Georgia policy is inactive. It reflects Europe's passive conditionality, in trying to encourage the transformation of neighboring states into effective partners with a stable democracy and a competitive market economy, while avoiding direct obligations to directly guaranteeing eventual accession to the EU. This passive policy is laden with negative consequences as it both undermines the EU's credibility, and halts the prospect of security arrangements in its immediate

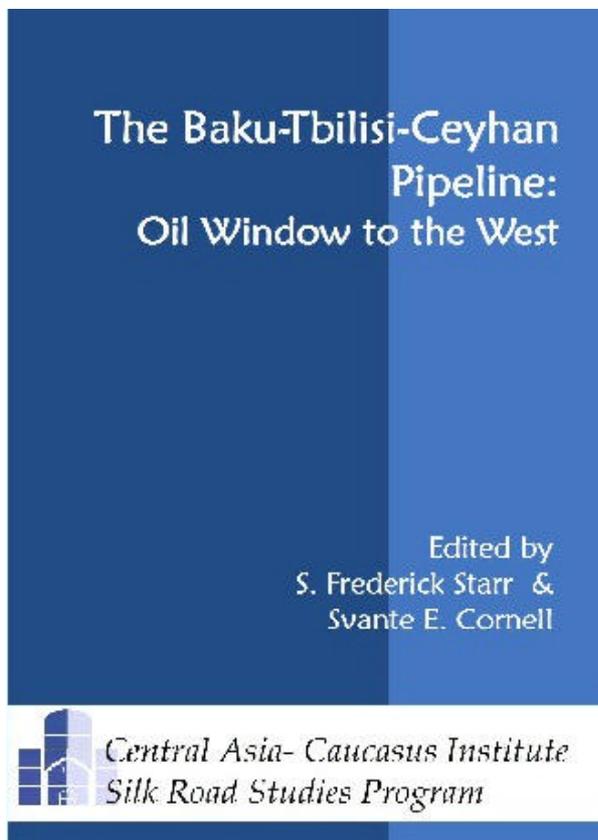
neighborhood, especially with Turkey's EU accession negotiations now open.

The freshened peace processes are supported by Washington, which has long questioned the impartiality of the Russian forces in Georgia. While avoiding open confrontation with Moscow, the Bush administration, with its broad political agenda in Georgia, is being fairly dismissive of Russian sensibilities about its influence in the South Caucasus. The new U.S. ambassador to Georgia, John Tefft, has stated that the U.S. wants to see more progress in resolving the Abkhaz and South Ossetian conflicts, and that keeping the Russian-led negotiating format does not seem to be an option. In trying to encourage Moscow to agree to a new negotiating format of talks, Tbilisi may pursue a pragmatic option of seeking international backing to broader Caucasus security issues where Washington could engage with Russia on the many problems it faces in the region.

CONCLUSIONS: Georgia seems ready to accept constructive solutions with regard to Russian

peacekeeping, but clearly indicates the status quo is no longer acceptable. Tbilisi has been exploiting international multilateral fora as useful avenues in persuading Russia over the withdrawal of bases. By moving further towards pushing Russia to play a more constructive role in the peace process, Tbilisi will now have to use the momentum of its own making and continue to diversify the gravitational forces for the secessionist provinces by engaging external mediators through economic and security assistance programs that will help to realize an economic and social rapprochement of Abkhaz and South Ossetians with Georgia. Whether Russian authorities will be receptive to a new pragmatic geopolitical agenda will also depend on greater Western engagement in the negotiating process.

AUTHOR BIO: Khatuna Salukvadze is an analyst on the Caucasus and Central Asia. She holds degrees from Harvard University and London School of Economics, and is based in Tbilisi, Georgia.



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CACO MERGES WITH EEC: THE THIRD STRIKE ON CENTRAL ASIA'S INDEPENDENCE

Farkhad Tolipov

The Central Asian region has constantly since independence suffered from strong external geopolitical pressure. This pressure implies that Central Asians cannot accomplish post-Soviet reintegration on their own, as was announced in 1991. On the last summit of the Central Asian Cooperation Organization (CACO) held in Saint-Petersburg on October 6, 2005, the member-states – Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan and Russia – announced that the CACO merged with the Eurasian Economic Community (EEC) membership which includes the CACO countries minus Uzbekistan and plus Belarus.

BACKGROUND: Since the dissolution of the former Soviet super-state, the newly independent Central Asian states have undertaken different attempts to strengthen their independence by means of modeling integration. The first name of the model was the Central Asian Commonwealth, which in the mid-1990s was changed to the Central Asian Economic Community. In 2001, the name was changed to the Central Asian Cooperation Organization (CACO). All these steps reflected a real, albeit modest, movement forward. It should be recognized that there were backward movements and stagnation periods as well, but these periods were caused mostly by destructive external geopolitics.

Indeed, even the common threat of insurgency and terrorism – phenomena that were supposed to lead to unprecedented regional cooperation – in reality had the opposite effect. They led to increased mistrust and mutual incriminations among Central Asian states, the tightening of their borders, and the mining of some border sections. However, some recall that these negative consequences of the terrorist threat were produced to a great extent by the actions of some external forces, which tried to use the terrorist incursions of 1999 and 2000 for their own benefits.

Another factor is that Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan have remained under strong Russian influence since 1991, while Uzbekistan insisted on its real independence. Moreover, while the United States has always officially emphasized its intention to support regional integration in the region and strengthen the

independence of the Central Asian states, the Russian Federation never announced a similar official strategy with respect to this region. As a result, geopolitical games yielded split among Central Asian governments.

It deserves mention that in spite of massive geopolitical stakes, Central Asian leaders never ceased their forum. Four, sometimes five, leaders of these states regularly met at summits to push forward the integration process. Moreover, this process reflected the serious intention of these leaders to strengthen the independence of their respective countries.

IMPLICATIONS: Surprisingly, on October 6, the four Central Asian leaders (except Turkmenistan's President Niyazov) suddenly sacrificed all the assets of their regional integration efforts collected since independence. In fact, it was not so much a merger of two organizations as rather simply the entrance of Uzbekistan into the Eurasian Economic Community. By this move of great geopolitical importance, Tashkent unexpectedly recognized an organization to which it has always been critical.

This swift but fundamental decision was adopted without serious political debate on the national level. Therefore, the new developing structure is a creation of the Presidents, rather than a will of the people of the participant states. It is reminiscent of the creation of the CIS itself, that is a decision made very rapidly, in fact overnight. Indeed, such a fundamental

decision – the sacrifice of the very concept of Central Asia for the sake of a looser cooperative concept – might be widely discussed publicly in the mass media, among experts and analysts, and in the respective parliaments. Taking into account the recent trends, the parliament of Uzbekistan and other Central Asian parliaments will most likely accept this presidents' surprise and ratify the St. Petersburg agreement.

Integration or reintegration within the CIS is not something impossible or undesirable, if it amounts to integration among equals. Yet the six states concerned can hardly be considered as equals and the structure can only be characterized as inadequate. On the one hand, Russia will always remain the dominant power or even the hegemon. On the other hand, the EEC includes a proto-federation, the Russia-Belarus Union. Hence in this new structure, the four Central Asian states will see their role diluted.

At the same time, it seems very likely that recently increased western pressure on Uzbekistan after the Andijan tragedy of 13-14 May this year was one of the main reasons determining Uzbekistan's entrance in the EEC. Uzbekistan's refusal of the American and European demand for an international investigation of the Andijan events led to sanctions being imposed on Uzbekistan. The recent events are Tashkent's response to international isolation.

The increasing concentration of the CIS into effectively six post-Soviet republics (of the original 12) is taking place against the background of the general failure of the Commonwealth's integration. Paradoxically, the "reintegration" of half of the Commonwealth was achieved at the expense of the factual disintegration of a third of its part – that is Central Asia. At the last CACO, summit President Islam Karimov did not make a secret of his sympathy for Russia, which, according to him, is a reliable strong leader and a central country in the post-Soviet space. The question that arises is whether Central Asians, who mistrusted each other so much while in a regional organization, will trust each other more under Russian patronage?

In fact, the October 6 event was the third strike on Central Asian regional unity since independence. The first strike took place when the Russian Federation became a full fledged member of CACO in 2004, since that membership distorted the geographical configuration and natural political composition of Central Asia's attempts at regional organization. The second strike took place with the recent Shanghai Cooperation Organization ultimatum to the West, primarily the U.S., to shut down military bases in Central Asia, followed by Uzbekistan's direct demand for the withdrawal of these contingents. The third strike – merging CACO with EEC – threatens the self-value and independent existence of Central Asia. It raises the question whether this third strike on Central Asia means the genuine end of its independent history.

CONCLUSIONS: As a quasi-political structure and an institutionalized region, Central Asia no longer exists. But it remains a region with peoples that share a common history, origin, territory, as well as common challenges to their security that predetermine their own integration. For instance, the security threats that Central Asia faces, diverge from those faced by Belarus and Russia. For example, Central Asia was proclaimed in 1997 by all its five states as a Nuclear Weapons Free Zone, but the EEC can never be that.

Once, when three presidents decided at Byelovezho to shut down the USSR and create the CIS, they stated: "From now on the Soviet Union no longer exists as a state and as a geopolitical reality". This meant that the geopolitical integrity of the post-Soviet states was officially sentenced to disappear. Unless Russia, the creator of the CIS, denounces that geopolitical reality, the CIS will remain all but genuine integration. Any pro-unification experiment within the CIS will depend primarily on two factors – Russia's foreign policy and the development of the newly independent states as independent political actors in the international system.

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COUNTER-NARCOTICS IN TAJIKISTAN AND KYRGYZSTAN: COMPETITION AND COOPERATION

Jacob Townsend

Data on drug seizures in Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan first reaches the public through press announcements provided by a spokesman for each counter-narcotics agency. This separation of reporting is symptomatic of the fact that inter-agency cooperation remains problematic. There is significant duplication of functions such as intelligence collection and criminal group infiltration without a level of information-sharing to support accurate national analytical capacity and overall operational efficiency. The “healthy competition” referred to by Ministry of Interior (MoI) and Drug Control Agency (DCA) officials reduces the effectiveness of counter-narcotics efforts. There is little hope for changing this while officers accept the current culture.

BACKGROUND: Both Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan give their counter-narcotics efforts a high public profile, partly in response to international pressure that has also furnished them with a national DCA each. This has added to the number of agencies responsible for drug control in each country, all of which are represented every ‘reporting season’ when they detail their recent successes in terms of such things as traffickers arrested and volumes of drugs seized. Overall, each of these agencies has significantly different functions but in the field of counter-narcotics their responsibilities overlap. For example, with its far superior manpower, the Ministries of Interior are able to duplicate the full range of DCA responsibilities, although the general knowledge of their staff on drug control issues is usually inferior. There are therefore numerous formal inter-agency agreements between Customs, Border Guards, MoI, DCA and the Ministries of National Security that commit them to cooperation in, for example, facility-sharing and the sharing of both general and operational intelligence. The majority of senior officials in these agencies profess themselves satisfied with these agreements and believe that the systems they have devised to implement them work well.

Particularly on the Tajik-Afghan border, inter-agency cooperation is regularly showcased in joint

operations. Usually, the Border Guards execute a seizure on intelligence provided by another agency, such as that received from the MoI and which led to the seizure of 23kg of various opiates on September 7. However, that border is exceptional as a counter-narcotics arena because of its militarization and because of the frequent exchange of gunfire. This encourages cooperation between the domestic surveillance capability of the Tajik MoI and the military muscle of the country’s Border Guards. Nationally and regionally, such regular use of synergies is less common.

IMPLICATIONS: In the words of the Director of the Tajik DCA, “there are destructive attitudes” present in some inter-agency relationships. This is most obviously the case between the DCA and the MoI, whose roles are very similar in terms of gathering intelligence on upcoming drug shipments and in arresting the perpetrators. Despite the designation of the countries’ respective DCAs as the lead coordinator of counter-narcotics efforts in Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan, the effect that this has had on inter-agency cooperation within each country is small. Although it should be helpful that most DCA officers are drawn from police ranks, institutional divisions clearly develop. Thus, while a Tajik MoI official asserts that his officers do not interfere with other agencies because they trust

them, information-sharing was problematic because “intelligence can’t be spread” for fear of leakage. The DCA in Bishkek gives the same reason for hoarding intelligence unless there is a pressing need to share. While the level of corruption remains high in these countries, there is undoubtedly some sense in limiting the number of people with access to operational intelligence. The Customs departments are systematically corrupt, for example, and it would therefore be risky to inform them of upcoming operations or enlist their help in executing these. Similarly, the number of police officers whose applications to the Kyrgyz DCA are rejected after polygraph failures is only one hint that the sprawling Interior Ministries are susceptible to penetration by organized crime.

There are nevertheless significant risks in the barriers to cooperation between what should be complementary agencies. While there are reasons to protect operational intelligence, holding on to information of any sort compromises the overall picture that might be built up as to links within and between organized crime groups, both domestically and internationally. For example, it is conceivable that in a meeting between two criminals, the Ministry of Interior recognises one of the participants and the DCA recognises the other, without the two agencies being aware of each other’s information. Even at a high level within each agency, officials remain unaware of pieces of intelligence that are considered crucial by an official in a different agency and happily discussed with foreign visitors. There is therefore a trade-off of intelligence divisions between organizations and the efficiency/accuracy of national drug control efforts.

More worryingly, fear of corruption does not seem to be the only or even major concern in hoarding information. It is striking that many senior officials prefer cooperation with their counterparts in other countries rather than with their countrymen in other agencies. This is naturally necessary on occasions when there are controlled deliveries or other international operations. There are also problems with legal frameworks in Tajikistan and

Kyrgyzstan that sometimes make it simpler to carry out cross-border operations rather than internal joint operations. However, the desire to enhance institutional prestige domestically also serves as an impetus to hoard intelligence. In the case of the DCA a financial incentive might also be an influence, since officers receive US-funded bonuses for the seizures they execute.

CONCLUSIONS: Inter-agency counter-narcotics cooperation in Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan is sub-optimal. There are sensible reasons to limit intelligence-sharing for fear of corruption but an unhealthy concern for enhancing agency prestige is also present. All counter-narcotics officers are conscious of their agencies’ standing and aware of their efficiency in executing seizures, which can serve as healthy motivation. Currently, however, competition is negatively affecting cooperation and compromising mid-level analytical capacity in both countries. The consequences of this are felt both at the higher level in broader national and regional understandings of the drug trade and organized crime; and downwards because these analyses guide operations and operational priorities. The prospects for improving this situation are not good. While most officials are aware of competitive relations with other agencies the Tajik DCA Director is in a minority of those who see it as a problem. International donors are in a poor position to induce changes to this culture and focus mainly on cross-border cooperation. Improvement in the situation awaits a general increase in law enforcement professionalism.

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FIELD REPORTS

NEW CONSTITUTIONAL REFORMS UNDERWAY IN KYRGYZSTAN

Nurshat Ababakirov

On October 13, a Constitutional meeting was held in Bishkek with a view to adopting changes to the Constitution of Kyrgyzstan. Reforms to the structure of the three branches of government and other procedures were discussed, but the proposals that attracted the attention of many experts and parliamentarians was the proposal of stripping members of parliament of their immunity.

At the constitutional meeting, President Kurmanbek Bakiev spoke against immunity for the president, prime minister and parliamentarians, connecting it to the growth of corruption. However, several parliamentarians expressed their anxiety over the possibility of this amendment being used to remove or at least to manipulate them. The Speaker of the Jogorku Kenesh (Parliament) Omurbek Tekebaev and other parliamentarians regarded the President's remarks as populist, because during Akaev's rule immunity was also rolled back, and it was mainly used to remove some parliamentarians, leading to the neutralization of the parliament, instead of fighting corruption. It was also proposed to revoke some of the immunity and privileges of former President Askar Akaev. However, the Speaker of the Jogorku Kenesh disagreed since laws should not be applied retroactively.

Supporters of the proposal argued that immunity was the reason why various candidates with a shaky reputation ran for parliament. They point to the fact that former Prime Minister Nikolay Tanaev, who is being charged with financial violations and abuse of power, announced intentions to run for parliament.

Right after the March revolution, constitutional reforms became one of the priorities of the new government. Since the independence of Kyrgyzstan, referendums have been held five times, leading to constitutional changes to the favor of former President Askar Akaev. Hence analysts claim the Constitution does not restrain the incumbent president from gaining absolute power. However, even after seven months, there were no noticeable sign of progress.

The President was criticized for slow progress in the constitutional reforms. Frustration over slow progress of constitutional reforms and breaking away from Akaev's regime has damaged President Bakiev's popularity. Revolutionary momentum was lost when he supported the current Parliament's legitimacy right after the March revolution. However, to boost the morale, U.S. State Secretary Condoleezza Rice visited Bishkek on October 11 and urged President Bakiev to finalize constitutional reforms by the end of the year.

After constant criticisms from the opposition and civil society for gathering like-minded people and for being the Chairman of the Constitutional Council himself, President Kurmanbek Bakiev on October 12 issued a decree to include some people from the opposition, like former Prosecutor General Azimbek Beknazarov, who was removed from his position for alleged incompetence. Moreover, former Minister of Foreign Affairs Roza Otumbaeva, who was not approved by the Parliament, the Chairman of the Kyrgyz Commission on Human Rights, Ramazan Dyrlydaev, and others, were included. The

membership of the Constitutional meeting has now grown from initially 144 members to 277, and now to 289.

The overall membership of the Constitutional meeting includes people of various backgrounds – representatives of civil society, political parties, business, government officials, and the opposition. However, Raya Kadyrova, a member of the Constitutional Council and President of the foundation Tolerance International, says she is disappointed by the fact that many members depend on government salaries and that the way they vote is predictable. In her view, the president is not honoring his promise of a dialogue with civil society.

Another issue that has raised debate is the future governmental system. "The authority of a nationally elected president has to be greater because he is elected by the whole Kyrgyzstani nation," said President Bakiev, arguing that the current Parliament already has enough powers. On the other hand, the Speaker of the Jogorku Kenesh argues for increasing the role of the Parliament and Cabinet of Ministers. He pointed out that during the last 14 years Kyrgyzstan had eight different prime ministers and ten different cabinets. He also emphasized the necessity to inform the public about

the parliamentary system of government because past experience showed that much depends on how well it is informed about changes.

The term of the presidency is also drawing much attention. Currently, the law stipulates that the president cannot be elected for more than two consecutive terms. In a speech to the meeting, former Speaker of the Parliament Medetkan Sherimkulov proposed to drop the word 'consecutive' to limit the presidency only for two terms in life. A one-term presidency, to restrain possible clinging to power, was also considered several months ago, but there were too many doubts that president could fully implement his program and show tangible results within that period.

Another concern has been the elections to the Jogorku Kenesh, whether it should be through party lists or single mandates, or a mixed system. "MPs are still connected to their constituencies and act like a single person. Mainly regional interests are represented in the Parliament" said Karsten Shenfield, an German MP. A party list system or a mixed system, he argued, would contribute to the reduction of clashes of single mandate candidates' supporters and help to advance more structured parties, based on specific platforms and ideologies, and with lesser regional affiliations.

ASTANA RULES OUT RUSSIAN-KAZAKH UNIFICATION

Marat Yermukanov

Astana is paying a high political price for spearheading a policy of integration with Russia within the Eurasian Economic Community and Single Economic Space, which is seen as an attempt to revive the totalitarian regime. A controversial article in the Russian business magazine *Finans* added new doubts about the true nature of Russian-Kazakh relations.

In its October 3-9 issue, the Russian business magazine, little known in Kazakhstan, stated,

though without reference to any particular source, that the Kremlin was contemplating a scheme of unification of Russia with Kazakhstan. The article signed by Oleg Anissimov said the unification of the two states with the total area covering 80% of the former Soviet Union, with Putin as president, would ensure the reelection of Vladimir Putin in the 2008 presidential voting and give Nursultan Nazarbayev more political security in his new position as vice-president of the would-be union

state. The author argues that recent developments, particularly frequent talks between Nazarbayev and Putin, as well as the appointment of Igor Finogenov, the former director of the Nomos Bank, as advisor to the Russian finance minister point to the beginning of unification between Kazakhstan and Russia. Allegedly, Finogenov's responsibilities would include the establishment of a Eurasian Development Bank with \$1 billion Russian and \$500 million Kazakh capital investments.

The publication in the *Finans* magazine sparked a mixture of indignation and surprise in the parliament of Kazakhstan. Apparently, the article was nothing more than a media canard released, as nationalists suspect, by the Kremlin to test the reaction of Astana to this possibility. The article in *Finans* was generally ignored by the government of Kazakhstan as one of many irresponsible provocations used by Russian political factions, and no official statement was made. For all its incredibility, the publication did cause some stir among parliament members who, although they generally dismissed the "behind-the-scene unification deal" as disinformation, were left guessing about the source of the publication. The article could have been submitted by opponents of president Nazarbayev in Kazakhstan. Well-informed sources in the Russian State Duma rule out the possibility of unification of two independent states as a total absurdity. A representative of the Russian Foreign Ministry, Mikhail Kamynin, announced that the issue of unification had never been raised by Kremlin policy makers and Russia respects the sovereignty of Kazakhstan.

Although Moscow played down political implications of the publication the stone was thrown to stir up great Russian ambitions still alive among Russians in Kazakhstan and members of the People's Communist Party of Kazakhstan. But pro-Moscow movements that were active in the early 1990s are perceptibly running out of steam as Kazakhstan is moving toward economic and political stability, bringing all ethnic groups into the

process of what Astana calls the democratization of society. It is evident for the Russian community that Kazakhstan will not sacrifice its armed forces, national currency and territorial integrity for the sake of a doubtful union with Russia.

The embarrassing point is that the publication in the *Finans* was timed to the meeting of Central Asian leaders with Vladimir Putin in Saint Petersburg. The main outcome of the talks was the announced decision of the Central Asian Cooperation Organization to join the Eurasian Economic Cooperation organization. While benefits from the integration of Moscow and Minsk are questionable for Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan and Kazakhstan, there are considerable gains to be derived for the Kremlin, poised as an epicenter of integration of Central Asian states torn apart by disagreements over energy and water resources, and a volatile border situation. To the great satisfaction of Moscow, the adamant Uzbek president Islam Karimov displayed more flexibility in talks with Kremlin in the face of the growing international criticism after Andijon massacre and spoiled relations with the United States. However, the unpredictable and constantly changing mood of Tashkent puts the viability of the alliance between Eurasian Economic Cooperation and Central Asian Cooperation Organization in doubt. Kyrgyz leader Kurmanbek Bakiev is cautious in developing relations with Moscow and apparently reluctant to part with the U.S. air base on the territory of his country.

All these controversies taken into account, Moscow views Astana as one of the remaining few loyal partners, if not a potential member of a visionary union. In economic terms, this vision reflects reality. Russian oil companies Lukoil and Sibneft are penetrating deeper into Kazakh oilfields. Astana responded positively to the call of the Russian prime-minister to integrate energy resources of the Eurasian Economic Cooperation member states. But at this stage, Kremlin can hardly count on more concessions from Kazakhstan.

IS KYRGYZSTAN FRIENDLY TO FOREIGN INVESTORS?

Aziz Soltobaev

The detention of a well-known foreign investor on allegations of financial fraud has drawn attention to Kyrgyzstan. Businessmen consider this case as a test for the new authorities to show their ability to work transparently and by the rule of law. It is the second case involving foreign investors in the country. Observers do not exclude that attempts are under way to pressure businessmen in order to take over enterprises, or to extract bribes for providing “safety of operations” in the country.

On September 6, 2005, Italian businessman Giorgio Fiacconi was arrested and put in jail. The financial police accused Fiacconi of embezzlement, on charges leveled three months earlier, and of violating an order not to leave Bishkek. Fiacconi left Kyrgyzstan and was arrested upon his return to the country. Fiacconi has interests in trade: he is a major shareholder of the Aichurek Bishkek mall, a co-owner of the Kyrgyzcredit bank, the founder of the Times of Central Asia Newspaper, as well as Honorary Council of Italy in Kyrgyzstan.

The day before, the construction of a trade and residential center was stopped for a month for investigations launched by the Bishkek council. Authorities stated that the largest Turkish investor in the country had not been approved by inspections and had been constructing the building illegally. From the beginning of construction in May 2005 up to the present time, Turkish businessmen had invested some \$10 million, and the building was about to open late this Fall.

Some observers in Bishkek consider that these allegations are veils for attempts by some officials to acquire slices of businesses run by foreign businessmen. This in turn, raised doubts regarding the purposes of the March revolution, when ex-president Askar Akayev was ousted following the fraudulent parliamentary elections. One of the reasons for Akayev's fall was the attempts of his

family to control most of the successful business ventures in country by pressuring businessmen through the use of administrative resources, including numerous inspections, arrests and inconsistent allegations of various violations.

For businessmen based in Bishkek, the first result of March 24 revolution was the nocturnal looting in the capital with estimated losses of some \$100 million. Later, a special commission under the acting government started investigating companies on a list of some 100 enterprises that were allegedly partly owned by Akayev's family. The investigation under acting deputy prime minister Daniyar Usenov finished its work on June and surprisingly did not find any traces.

Observers say some members of the commission pursued personal goals of property redistribution and succeeded in buying out shares at low value under book.

Further, a group of local activists accused the management of the Naryn-based coal mining company of ties with the Akayevs, seized the mine and finally legitimized their role in acquiring ownership with the assistance of governmental officials.

A survey of companies conducted by the International Business Council (IBC) in June found that most trends in the business environment remained the same – neither better nor worse – but one indicator had dramatically deteriorate: the legal environment. Investors put top priority in their concerns to the safety and security of their businesses. Investor confidence in Kyrgyzstan's future remains low to the present day.

After the takeovers of local companies, suspicion increases that authorities wish to get a slice of international businesses in the country. Fiacconi's arrest and the shutdown of the Turkish business center could represent trial balloons for the new

leadership to increase investor confidence and recover the economy accordingly.

The International Business Council gathers a wide range of businesses with combined investments of over \$1 billion in the Kyrgyz economy. Its director, David Grant, told this author that "essentially people at the top of the government make sure that whatever happens is totally legal, and the process and outcome transparent". If they don't, Grant argued, there will be another black mark on investments in the future. If investors do not see that this process or its outcome is transparent and legal, or if they consider the moves as pressure to takeover businesses, investments in the country will decline.

Businessmen will remain in a state of uncertainty and caution until the new government cabinet is set up. It is already three weeks since President Kurmanbek Bakiyev's inauguration, but the

authorities have not been able to staff the cabinet with the right figures. The main question regarding foreign investors today is what kind of companies could do business in Kyrgyzstan.

Grant said they will likely not be western. Considering "the way the country is going, big investments are likely only to come from Russia, Kazakhstan or possibly in the future China, where companies are close to their governments and have political pressure to apply to the Kyrgyz Government. Western investors will be very cautious, because there is big uncertainty regarding what will happen with their investments in the future. Because Russians, Kazakh, and the Chinese have leverage here. If companies are close to their governments, there is more confidence. For European companies it is difficult, because they do not have leverage in Kyrgyzstan".

PAKISTAN AFTER THE EARTHQUAKE: 'COMPASSION FATIGUE' IS NO REPLY

Naveed Ahmad

Tens of thousands of Pakistanis perished in the 7.6-Richter scale earthquake on October 8. The impact zone of the earthquake ranged from northern Pakistan to Jammu and Kashmir, the Muslim-dominated state that remains disputed and divided between Pakistan and India. Estimates suggest that at least 50,000 have died in Jammu and Kashmir with the capital of Azad Kashmir, Muzaffarabad, leveled to the ground. Some 2,000 deaths are reported from the disputed part of the state administered by India. The earthquake left perhaps four million people homeless with a frosty winter at hand.

Pakistan's worst and strongest earthquake originated from an epicenter 10 kilometers deep located somewhere in Mansehra district (34.432°N and 73.537°E). It brought its first and severest tremors at 8.50 in the morning. The region's worst quake took

place on May 30, 1935, and is thought to have been of an intensity of 8.1, killing over 30,000 inhabitants.

Normally, earthquakes in Pakistan have been centered in the Hindu Kush mountain ranges and inside Afghanistan. The October 8 earthquake not only brought death and destruction to northern Pakistan and the entire Jammu and Kashmir state, but also raised newer scientific questions as to whether new tectonic activity has started in the Hazara division, endangering not only the populous cities of Peshawar to Lahore but also putting at risk the civilian and defense industries located in the seismological zone.

World Health Organization regional chief Hussein Gezairy said it would be "much, much more difficult" to reach quake victims in the Himalayas than tsunami survivors in Southeast Asia. "In the

tsunami 1.5 million people were made homeless, but in this case we expect more than 2.5 million to be homeless," he said. "For the 1.5 million people who were homeless, something like \$10 billion were mobilized. I do not expect this to be happening in Pakistan, but I hope that people will give much more," he said.

It goes without saying that the government was little equipped to rescue thousands of trapped survivors. From very basic needs such as tents and high energy BP-5 biscuits to modern, hi-tech devices like cargo helicopters and hand-held concrete cutting saws, the government had little to mobilize for protecting the disaster-hit nation.

Soon after the scale of disaster started showing its ugly face, the world swiftly moved in to assist Pakistan, with Saudi Arabia and Turkey being the foremost. Besides the Muslim Arab nations, Japan, Britain, Sweden, China, France, European Commission and of course the United States offered assistance in a variety of ways ranging from cash, tents and foodstuff to helicopters. Pakistan accepted Indian relief goods but refused to accept Indian helicopters assisting in relief missions if flown by Indian pilots, fearing "real-time exposure to topology and its security-sensitive locations". New Delhi, on the other hand, did not agree on sending its aircraft without pilots. In line with its softer policy toward Israel, Islamabad quietly accepted Israeli offers of humanitarian aid.

The earthquake offered the United States an ideal opportunity to build back its deteriorating image by announcing relief assistance and flying in eight helicopters from Afghanistan followed by a short sympathy visit by Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice. The U.S. government is sending another 24 helicopters to Pakistan for relief operations in the earthquake-hit areas.

Another important development was the Islamists' lead over the military-led operations in reaching the disaster zone for rescue and relief. Even Msuharruf publicly sought apology for the army's late as well as slow intervention.

Interestingly, the otherwise media-weary Pakistani government gave blanket access to international TV channels and newspapers to freely report from the disaster zone. To avert public anger, the death toll is gradually being revised upwards from 40,000 to more realistic numbers which could reach 100,000.

Snow has already started to fall in the disputed state of Jammu and Kashmir and the relief workers are rightly worried that within three weeks, hundreds of thousands of people will be cut off due to the multiple effects of unfriendly weather and quake-devastated roads.

Thousands of injured people languish without shelter and medical care in cities and villages across the earthquake-stricken region as the country has run out of tents. Pakistan will need at least two million tents to set up makeshift cities in the short term while reconstruction costs may well surpass the initial estimate of \$5 billion.

Since the dark year of 2005 has been a year of natural disasters – the tsunami, Katrina, Rita and then the earthquake – strains on the international donor community as well as the well-to-do cosmopolitans has grown to a record level with assistance to Afghanistan, Iraq and misery in Africa far from over.

With 100,000 dead and many more homeless, the affected people will need a continuous supply of assistance to restart their lives. The million-dollar question here remains: Will the wealthy foreign and local communities be affected by "compassion fatigue"?

The world's donor community has used the term compassion fatigue much more often than before. The western world has stood by its words in Sudan and in the Asian tsunami, and will hopefully keep this up in South Asia as well. The survivors look towards the wealthy nations hoping that they will summon up the same spirit of compassion once more. Will the Pakistani ruling elite lend ears to this bloody wake-up call, and develop disaster management infrastructures for future?

NEWS DIGEST

POWER-SHARING AGREEMENT NEARLY
READY - CHECHEN PRESIDENT

5 October

A bill on power sharing between the federal and Chechen authorities is nearly ready, Chechen President Alu Alkhanov said. "The main provisions of the agreement have been negotiated with the presidential envoy in the Southern Federal District, Dmitry Kozak. But the signing of the agreement is being delayed for objective reasons. It is the first agreement of this format in Russia," Alkhanov told the press in Grozny. "The power-sharing agreement, like the Chechen constitution, is the creation of [slain Chechen President] Akhmad Kadyrov," he said. Alkhanov pointed out that, "the initial draft has been updated and brought into line with the federal legislation." "The Federal Law on the Subsoil Mineral Resources does not give Chechnya the right to use its oil as it sees fit," the Chechen president said. (Interfax)

GEORGIA WITHDRAWING FROM MOSCOW
UNESCO OFFICE

5 October

Georgia has decided to withdraw from the Moscow UNESCO office, a source in the Georgian Foreign Ministry told Interfax on Wednesday. A note of protest containing this decision has been handed to UNESCO Deputy General Director Marcio Barbosa. The Moscow UNESCO office posted a map of Georgia on its website that did not include Abkhazia and South Ossetia. This served as the reason for Georgia's protest. According to the Georgian Foreign Ministry, Barbosa, during his meeting with Georgia's ambassador to France and envoy to UNESCO Natiya Dzharparidze. (Interfax)

US SENATE BLOCKS UZBEK PAYMENT

6 October

The US Senate has voted to block a \$23m payment to Uzbekistan, after the Uzbek government ended an agreement for US troops to use an airbase there. The payment, for past use of the base, will be postponed for at least a year. The Karshi-Khanabad base has been an integral part of US military operations in the region for nearly four years. But in July, Tashkent asked the US to leave the base, after it criticised the violent suppression of demonstrations in the town of Andijan in May. "Paying our bills is important. But more important is America's standing up for itself, avoiding the mis-impression that we overlook massacres and avoiding cash transfers to the treasury of a dictator," said Republican Senator John McCain, who sponsored the amendment that will block

payment. Mr McCain said the actions of Uzbek President Islam Karimov were so alarming that the Senate should be considering sanctions against him, "not how to transfer millions of taxpayers' dollars to his government." The airbase at Karshi-Khanabad (K-2), in south-eastern Uzbekistan, has been an important hub for US operations in neighbouring Afghanistan following the 11 September 2001 attacks. Its location in a secure area, a short journey from the Afghan border, made it an ideal logistical centre. But in July the Uzbek government gave American troops six months to leave the base - a move which analysts say is linked to American criticism over the bloody suppression of unrest in Andijan. There are still disputed versions of exactly what happened in the incident, when troops fired on a crowd of people. The government says the violence was the result of an attempt by Islamic militants to seize power, and puts the number of dead at 187. But witnesses say more than 500 people were killed, and human rights groups have repeatedly called for an international investigation. (BBC)

IRAN DOES NOT OBJECT TO U.S. RADAR
STATION IN AZERBAIJAN

7 October

Iran has nothing against the Azerbaijani-American project of building radar stations in Azerbaijan, member of the Iranian delegation to the talks on the legal status of the Caspian Sea, Movsum Baharvend, has said. "Iran is not opposed to other countries fighting terrorism, drug trafficking and other crimes," he told a Friday news conference in Baku after the 18th session of the working group drafting the convention on the legal status of the Caspian. "All five littoral states are interested in fighting smuggling. This is one of the issues on which the sides see eye to eye at both bilateral and multilateral talks," he said. (Interfax-Azerbaijan)

TEN PARTIES RUNNING FOR CHECHEN
PARLIAMENT

8 October

Ten political parties have nominated candidates to run in the Chechen parliamentary elections, due to be held on November 27, 2005, said Chechen Elections Commission Chairman Ismail Baikhanov. A total of 265 people are standing for election to the parliament as of October 8, including 65 planning to run for Council of the Republic mandates and 200 for the People's Assembly, Baikhanov told Interfax on Saturday. "Some have already been registered as candidates," Baikhanov said. "Roza Isayeva,

the widow of Chechen State Council Chairman Hussein Isayev, who was tragically killed at the Dynamo stadium, has pledged a deposit and has been registered as a candidate in the Shatoi electoral district," he said. "There are a lot of politicians and figures from science and the arts well-known in Chechnya and throughout Russia among the candidates," he said. Chechen singer Tamara Dadasheva has also declared her desire to run, he said. "The electoral campaign is proceeding amidst a generally calm atmosphere," Baikhanov said. Despite a public statement made by the leaders of the Rodina party that former Chechen Deputy Prime Minister Bislan Gantamirov would head the party list at the elections, "Rodina has submitted its roll, and Gantamirov's name does not appear on it," he said. The Chechen parliament is to be bicameral - the People's Assembly, which will be comprised of 20 deputies elected from party lists and 20 others elected in single-mandate electoral districts, and the Council of the Republic, in which each of the 18 deputies will represent one of the Chechen districts. (Interfax)

TWENTY-EIGHT OPPOSITION ACTIVISTS DETAINED IN BAKU - POLICE

9 October

Twenty-eight activists of Azerbaijan's opposition bloc Azadlyg have been detained by police for holding an unauthorized rally in Baku on Sunday, sources in the city's central police department said in a press release. "Small groups of radical opposition party activists violated public order in busy public places with intensive traffic. The overall number of participants in the rally did not exceed 400 people. Police took measures to prevent this unsanctioned action. Twenty-eight action participants who gravely violated public order and ignored police orders were detained," the release reads. Eleven policemen were injured in clashes with the demonstrators, it reads. The Azadlyg bloc comprises the Democratic Party, the Musavat party and the People's Front of Azerbaijan. People's Front of Azerbaijan leader Ali Kerimli told a news conference that from the very beginning, the authorities had planned to use force to thwart the rally. "We asked the Baku City Hall to allocate a venue for the rally, but the City Hall, following recommendations from the presidential administration, did not provide us with a venue, which we view as illegal," Kerimli said. "We have information that at least 52 participants in the rally were detained. In fact, several hundred people were detained. Twenty-seven sustained severe injuries. Ten journalists were injured as well. Two of them have been admitted to the intensive care unit," he said. Fuad Akhundov, chief of a directorate of the presidential administration's social and political department, said that the opposition tends to exaggerate the scale and role of individual events. "Numerous public

opinion surveys suggest that the Azadlyg bloc has a popularity rating of 6%-7%, while its leaders have announced plans to win more than 70% of seats in the country's future parliament. All this indicates that the opposition is prone to exaggerations. That is why today's action and Kerimli's assessment of it should be viewed in this context," Akhundov said. (Interfax)

KYRGYZ DEPUTY SUGGESTS YEAR-LONG MORATORIUM ON PROTESTS

10 October

Chairman of the Kyrgyz parliamentary Committee on State System and Law, Kambaraly Kongantiyev, has suggested a yearlong moratorium on protests, rallies and marches in Kyrgyzstan. "The situation is unstable, so the republic needs a yearlong moratorium on protests," Kongantiyev said in parliament on Monday. "The moratorium is inevitable. It does mean a deviation from democracy or a violation of civil rights and freedoms. It is an objective necessity and the only way to stabilize the situation in the country," he said. Kongantiyev suggested that parliament draft a moratorium resolution and submit it to the president for approval. (Interfax)

US GETS DEAL ON KYRGYZ AIR BASE

11 October

The US and Kyrgyzstan have reached an agreement to allow US-led coalition forces to continue using a military base near the Kyrgyz capital, Bishkek. The deal followed talks between US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice and President Kurmanbek Bakiev in Bishkek. The base has been used to launch missions in Afghanistan since the 2001 invasion to oust the Taliban. Kyrgyzstan had earlier urged the US to set a timetable for its withdrawal from military bases in Central Asia. One senior US diplomat described the negotiations between Ms Rice and President Bakiev for a continued US military presence at the Manas air base as "very tough". The airport remains crucial to the Americans, with 1,700 troops and millions of gallons of fuel passing through every month. It has become all the more important since Uzbekistan told the Americans to leave the K2 base there by the end of the year. The statement agreed in Bishkek says that Kyrgyzstan supports the presence of coalition forces at Manas until the mission of fighting terrorism in Afghanistan is completed. Kyrgyzstan still wants to discuss payment for the use of the base. The US has paid about \$50m in the past year, but the new government in Kyrgyzstan has expressed concerns about corruption. They believe some of the money was taken by the son of former President Askar Akayev. Mr Akayev was ousted from power in March of this year. (BBC)

RUSSIAN GENERAL ANNOUNCES CREATION OF 'CENTRAL ASIAN ARMY.'

11 October

CSTO (Collective Security Treaty Organization) Secretary-General Colonel General Nikolai Bordyuzha said on 11 October that a "large group of forces" will be created in Central Asia, similar to the Russia-Belarusian and Russian-Armenian integrated army groups. The CSTO comprises Armenia, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, and Russia. Bordyuzha said that the Central Asian army group will be composed "not from battalions, but from regiments and divisions and, in the event of a serious military conflict, it will defend CSTO members from all sides." In the event of an all-out war, CSTO members should transfer the command of their entire armed forces to the Central Asian group, he added. (RIA-Novosti)

ARMENIAN DEFENSE MINISTER DENIES LINK BETWEEN KARABAKH CONFLICT, RUSSIAN MILITARY BASE

12 October

Serzh Sarkisian took issue on 7 October with a hypothesis expressed the previous day at a NATO-organized seminar in Yerevan by Sir Brian Fall, who is the British special representative for the South Caucasus, RFE/RL's Armenian Service reported. Fall suggested that the Armenian government's continued willingness to host a Russian military base is due to fears of renewed aggression from Azerbaijan, and he asked rhetorically whether Armenia would want a "substantial Russian military presence on its territory" even after the Karabakh conflict is resolved. Sarkisian responded on 7 October saying that the Russian military presence has "nothing to do with the Karabakh problem and our relations with Azerbaijan in general." He said the Russian troops constitute "an integral part" of Armenia's security and "could be useful" in light of the hypothetical threat from Turkey, which, Sarkisian continued, "has until now pursued a hostile policy toward us." (RFE/RL)

KAZAKHSTAN 'SHOULD LEAD REFORM'

13 October

US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice has challenged Kazakhstan to be a leader of economic and democratic reform in Central Asia. Speaking in the Kazakh capital Astana, she called for the country's presidential elections set for December to be free and fair. Human rights groups have accused President Nursultan Nazarbayev of clamping down on opposition groups. They also expressed disappointment at Ms Rice's speech. The American Secretary of State deliberately avoided criticising President Nazarbayev. She did, however, call on the region to tackle corruption, which she described as a tax on the poor. But in a question and answer session following her speech, an opposition leader asked Ms Rice why she had not been more critical of what he called the

country's authoritarian regime. He said the press was closed and dissenters had been jailed. In her reply, Ms Rice said it was extremely important that opposition voices could mobilise without fear of intimidation. However, speaking to reporters later, opposition figures expressed disappointment that the US secretary of state had not been more direct. They accused the US of putting security and energy interests ahead of pressing for democratic reform. Later, at a joint news conference with President Nazarbayev, Ms Rice denied that she had softened her message because of US oil interests in the country. (BBC)

EU-AZERBAIJAN TENSIONS TEMPORARY - AZERI OFFICIAL

13 October

Deputy foreign minister Araz Azimov has said tensions between the European Union and Azerbaijan are temporary. The country's relations with the unrecognized Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (TRNC) are of humanitarian nature and implemented on an informal level. There is no need for making any conclusions from the recent opening of flights to Northern Cyprus, he said. The European Union earlier warned Azerbaijan may fall behind in its New Neighborhood Policy after it opened direct flights with TRNC. There are certain views about various problems in EU-Azerbaijan ties that could cause misunderstanding during the discussions, Azimov said. The deputy foreign minister said the EU-Azerbaijan relations are mainly based on the agreement on partnership, which envisions mutual respect, inviolability of borders and cooperation within the frame of international law. He said Azerbaijan attaches strategic importance to developing ties with the EU. The difference of opinions is a temporary political difficulty and the EU should also be interested in eliminating it, Azimov said. EU may apply differential approach to regional states. But in my opinion, this is outside its interests, considering Azerbaijan's role and capabilities, he added. (BakuToday)

CHECHEN RESISTANCE LAUNCHES MULTIPLE ATTACKS IN KABARDINO-BALKARIA

13 October

Armed fighters carried out a series of attacks in Nalchik, capital of the Kabardino-Balkaria Republic, on the morning of 13 October. Facilities targeted included the local headquarters of the Interior Ministry and the Federal Security Service, and the city's airport. A statement posted on the kavkazcenter.com website identified the attackers as fighters from the Kabardino-Balkar sector of the Caucasus Front. Chechen President Abdul-Khalim Sadullaev announced the appointment of commanders for all sectors of the Western front, including for Kabardino-Balkaria, five months ago.

ITAR-TASS quoted Kabardino-Balkaria President Arsen Kanokov as estimating that Russian troops had killed at least 50 of the estimated 150 fighters who participated in the attacks by around midday; local officials said at least 12 civilians had been killed in the fighting and some 64 injured. (RFE/RL)

KYRGYZSTAN TO SEEK RUSSIAN HELP IN ARRESTING AIDAR AKAYEV

14 October

The Kyrgyz Prosecutor General's Office intends to seek assistance from the Russian Prosecutor General's Office in its search for former Kyrgyz President Askar Akayev's son Aidar Akayev, the office's press service told Interfax on Friday. "Owing to the fact that the parliament stripped Aidar Akayev of his parliamentary privileges, the Prosecutor General's office is preparing materials in its search for him and is to seek help in the search from the Russian Prosecutor Generals' Office," the press service said. "According to the information we have, Akayev is currently staying in the Russian Federation," the press service said. (Interfax)

MOSQUE BOMB KILLS AFGHAN CLERIC

14 October

A leading Muslim cleric has been killed and 16 people hurt by a bomb detonated in a mosque in south-east Afghanistan. Pro-government cleric, Mullah Maulvi Ahmed Khan, was about to lead afternoon prayers when the remote controlled device was detonated, police say. Police chief, Mohammed Ayub, blamed the Taleban for the blast in Tani district, 25km (18 miles) south of Khost. More than 1,200 people have been killed in violence linked to militancy in Afghanistan this year. No one has yet said they carried out the attack. Mullah Khan was a member of the powerful pro-government provincial clerics' council, the ulema. He was a few minutes from leading prayers to a packed Ramadan gathering when the device exploded in the space reserved for the imam. Six of those hurt are seriously injured, police said. Mr Ayub said a search was underway for the bombers. The Taleban were blamed for attacks on pro-government clerics in the summer which left four dead. Two clerics in Kandahar and one each in Helmand and Paktika were killed. On 1 June in Kandahar, 20 people were killed and 40 injured when a suicide bomber targeted a mosque where mourners had gathered for a service for murdered cleric Mawlavi Abdullah Fayaz, who was killed by gunmen earlier in the week. (BBC)

NINETY-ONE MILITANTS ELIMINATED IN NALCHIK - MINISTER

14 October

Ninety-one militants have been eliminated during a special operation in Nalchik, according to recent reports

from Kabardino-Balkarian law enforcement agencies. "We continue to revise the number of eliminated militants which currently stands at 91. Another 36 militants have been detained on suspicion of involvement in the attack. Charges have already been presented to nine of them," Kabardino-Balkarian Interior Minister Khachim Shogenov told Interfax on Friday. (Interfax)

ZAKAYEV'S COMMENTS IN BRITISH MEDIA ANGER RUSSIA

14 October

Russia expressed anger on Friday because British media allowed Chechen separatist envoy Akhmed Zakayev, who has political asylum in the UK, to voice "public support" for Thursday's attack by militants on Nalchik, the capital of the Russian region of Kabardino-Balkaria. "This propagandist of terrorism, this terrorist instigator again expressed public support for terror, for the barbaric actions of the militants in Kabardino-Balkaria. Once again, he openly and blatantly called for violence, for killing Russian civilians," Anatoly Safonov, the Russian presidential envoy for international cooperation in combating terrorism, said in a commentary on the Russian Foreign Ministry's website. (Interfax)

TANKER BLAST AT US KANDAHAR BASE

14 October

An explosion outside a US-led coalition air base in southern Afghanistan has destroyed eight fuel tankers, military and government officials say. The blast in Kandahar, which injured two people, was caused by a suspected bomb, an Afghan military official said. One soldier said a fireball engulfed the tankers. "I heard a big bang and then a second one. I could see flames bursting out," he told AFP news agency. A US military spokeswoman said the tankers belonged to the Afghan army. The explosions occurred at about 0200 local time on Friday. "Two of the tankers exploded one after the other from mines inside them," Afghan military deputy commander Mohammad Sarwar told AFP. "Six other tankers also exploded and burnt. Two people were injured." More than 1,200 people have died in violence in Afghanistan this year. (BBC)

U.S. INTERESTED IN CLOSER COOPERATION WITH KAZAKHSTAN - KISSINGER

15 October

The U.S. leadership is interested in intensifying cooperation and interaction with Kazakhstan, said former U.S. secretary of state Henry Kissinger. Talking to journalists in Astana on Saturday following a meeting with Kazakh President Nursultan Nazarbayev, Kissinger said that the U.S. and Kazakhstan have good relations in the security field. He added that the fact that high-ranking U.S. officials have been regularly visiting

Kazakhstan of late shows that the U.S. administration is willing to deepen this cooperation and interaction. Kazakhstan, a country located at the crossroads of great civilizations and a leading supplier of energy to world markets, is playing a very important role both in the region and in the entire world, Kissinger said. Kissinger said he believes the country is witnessing significant economic and political progress. Kissinger hailed the outcome of his meeting with Nazarbayev. He said he had had a very interesting and useful conversation with the Kazakh president, all in an atmosphere of friendship and mutual understanding. Kissinger said he is looking forward to resuming this dialogue. (Interfax)

BAKU TO SUBMIT LIST OF PRIORITY COOPERATION PROJECTS TO BRUSSELS

15 October

Baku is to submit an action plan under the New Neighborhood policies to the European Union soon, Ashraf Shikhaliyev, head of the Azeri Foreign Ministry's Economic Relations and Development Department, has announced. We'll send an action plan under the New Neighborhood program, listing our priorities in cooperation with the European Union, to Brussels within ten days, Shikhaliyev told an international conference on Azerbaijan's economic development in Baku on Saturday. Shikhaliyev also said that Azerbaijan will urge its European partners to back a project to build a Baku-Akhalkalaki-Kars railway estimated at \$400 million. "This project will help launch cargo transport services at very low prices from Central Asia to Europe," he said. Shikhaliyev pointed out that China is also interested in the project. (Interfax)

33 LAW ENFORCERS, 12 CIVILIANS DIED IN NALCHIK - MINISTER

16 October

A total of 33 law enforcers died in Nalchik during the effort to rid the city of the militants that raided it, Interior Minister Rashid Nurgaliyev said on a Sunday night news show. "Our colleagues demonstrated high professional skills and courage and we bow our heads to them," he said. He added that 12 civilians died at the hands of terrorists in Nalchik. (Interfax)

NO THREAT OF NEW REVOLUTION IN KYRGYZSTAN - PRESIDENT

17 October

Kyrgyz President Kurmanbek Bakiyev has said there is no threat of any revolution in Kyrgyzstan. "I want to tell all our opponents who are predicting crises, disintegration and revolutions that there will be no disintegration, crisis or revolution," he said at an expanded Cabinet session on Saturday. The presidential press service quoted his speech on Monday. "The

criminal clans that felt free under the old government, people who grew rich thanks to unfair privatization are doing their utmost to regain control over the economy and political life in Kyrgyzstan," Bakiyev said. (Interfax)

KAZAKH OPPOSITION LEADER REGISTERED AS PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATE

17 October

Kazakhstan's Central Electoral Commission has registered the leader of the opposition block For Fair Kazakhstan, Zhamarkhan Tuyakbai as a presidential candidate. Tuyakbai is a second formally registered candidate for the head of state. Earlier, the CEC registered the incumbent president, Nursultan Nazarbayev. Originally, applications were filed by 18 contenders, including three women. Five, including three women, failed to pass the state language test. One has withdrawn the application. Twelve have remained on the list. The registration deadline expires on October 25. Kazakhstan's presidential election is due on December 4. (ITAR-TASS)

KAZAKHSTAN PERMITS CHINESE OIL DEAL

17 October

Kazakhstan will let a Chinese state-owned energy firm buy key oil assets in a deal that gives the central Asian nation a share of those assets. During the weekend, the government of Kazakhstan agreed to let China National Petroleum Corp. buy PetroKazakhstan, a private company, for \$4.8 billion from the company's Canadian owners, the Wall Street Journal reported Monday. As part of that agreement, CNPC promised to sell a one-third interest in PetroKazakhstan to an arm of the government of Kazakhstan. Kazakhstan's state-owned KazMunaiGaz energy company will buy the 33 percent stake in PetroKazakhstan from CNPC for about \$1.4 billion. Also, CNPC and KazMunaiGaz will split ownership of an oil refinery and agree to process a certain amount of crude through the facility, named Shymkent, the newspaper said. (UPI)

TROUBLE IN AZERBAIJAN AHEAD OF OPPOSITION LEADER'S RETURN

17 October

The anticipated return to Azerbaijan of an opposition leader has sparked trouble in the capital Baku. Dozens of Rasul Guliyev's supporters were arrested after police prevented them from getting to the airport. Guliyev, who faces corruption charges in Azerbaijan, had said he intended to return to take part in next month's parliamentary election. He has lived in exile in the US since 1996 after falling foul of President Heidar Aliyev, father of current leader Ilham. Guliyev, the head of the Democratic Party, was himself detained during a stopover in Simferopol in Ukraine. Local police said he

was held at the request of Azeri authorities and that he was now being questioned by an Interpol officer in Crimea. The former parliamentary speaker has been charged with embezzling the equivalent of around 83 million euros in state funds. He denies the charges and says they are politically motivated. (EuroNews)

BAKU AIRPORT DENIES GULIYEV'S PLANE PERMISSION TO LAND

17 October

Baku's Bina Airport has not given the plane carrying Azerbaijani Democratic Party leader Rasul Guliyev permission to land, party press secretary Nureddin Ismailov told the press. "Guliyev's plane has crossed the Azerbaijani border, but Bina Airport has not given it permission to land," he said. (Interfax)

AZERBAIJAN SECURITY TIGHT AS OPPOSITION LEADER FAILS TO SHOW

17 October

Azerbaijan deployed high security and made arrests in anticipation of the return from exile of a key opposition figure, but he failed to turn up as expected and was instead arrested in Ukraine on a warrant from Interpol, officials said. Rasul Guliyev, a former speaker of the Azerbaijani parliament and the head of the former Soviet republic's opposition Democratic Party (ADP) who now lives in the United States, had been due to return to Baku where authorities made clear they would arrest him immediately. Hundreds of anti-riot police were positioned around the Baku international airport, and access to the facility was closed for hours to members of the public, with the exception of airline passengers with valid tickets. Guliyev, who has been charged by the authorities in Azerbaijan with embezzling over 100 million dollars (83 million euros) in government money, has registered as a candidate in parliamentary elections scheduled for November 6 and to be watched closely as a test of democracy and stability here. Authorities late Sunday urged journalists and foreign diplomats to stay away on Monday from the airport, where they warned of possible clashes between security forces and anti-government activists who had announced plans to turn out in large numbers to greet Guliyev on his return. That anticipated return however was aborted while authorities and opposition activists offered contradictory explanations as to why. The deputy head of the Democratic Party, Sardar Jalaloglu, said that authorities had refused to grant landing rights in Azerbaijan for the plane carrying Guliyev on a flight from Britain. Meanwhile police officials in Ukraine said they had detained Guliyev on a request from Azerbaijan through Interpol after his plane landed in the Crimean city of Simferopol. "Mr. Guliyev was arrested by airport police and is currently being held at the airport," the head

of the local police unit, Andry Ivansov, told AFP. In televised remarks, Azerbaijan's Interior Minister Ramil Usubov would begin extradition procedures, which could take up to 40 days, adding he was "confident" they would be successful. Guliyev's reputed wealth and government contacts were expected to give anti-government forces a much-needed boost ahead of elections. Guliyev's opposition Azadliq (Freedom) bloc, which is made up of the ADP, the Popular Front Party and the Musavat party, has nevertheless pledged to go ahead with a new protest this weekend. (AFP)

DEFENSE, FOREIGN MINISTERS DENY TRANSFERRING MISSILE TECHNOLOGY TO IRAN

17 October

Speaking in New Delhi on 17 October, Russian Defense Minister Sergei Ivanov denounced the publication in the 16 October "Sunday Telegraph" of an article alleging that former members of the Russian military covertly helped Iran obtain technology to build missiles capable of reaching European capitals. According to the newspaper, Russian officers worked as middlemen in transferring the missile technology from North Korea to Iran. Ivanov called this report "nonsense and ravings," and added that "nobody has ever registered attempts by Russia to violate her international obligations." Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov said in Moscow the same day that he is "bewildered" by the report. Such reports actually appeared about 10 years ago and the Russian government probes after each allegation found no such violations, Lavrov said. (RIA-Novosti)

CHECHEN LEADER EXPRESSES REGRET AT CIVILIAN CASUALTIES IN NALCHIK

18 October

Abdul-Khalim Sadullaev, the successor to slain Chechen President and resistance leader Aslan Maskhadov, has released a statement, which was posted on 18 October on chechenpress.org, expressing "great regret" that some civilians died during the 13 October attack on Nalchik by fighters of the Kabadino-Balkar sector of the Caucasus Front. At the same time, Sadullaev stressed that the Chechen militants directed their fire exclusively at military facilities, and that the "absolute majority" of the civilian casualties died as a result of indiscriminate return fire by Russian and local police and security personnel. Sadullaev affirmed that the fighters who participated in the Nalchik raid "fulfilled all the tasks" set by their commander. He concluded: "May Almighty Allah help us liberate and unite the entire Caucasus!" (RFE/RL)

RELATIVES SEEK TO BURY NALCHIK VICTIMS

18 October

Citing the 2002 law on terrorism, police in Nalchik continue to refuse to give relatives the bodies of many young men killed in the 13 October raid on Nalchik, claiming the men in question were active participants, not innocent victims. While radical Chechen field commander Shamil Basaev said on 17 October that 42 of the 217 participants are dead or missing. Interfax the same day said some 50 bodies of "militants" remain unidentified. Some 30 women gathered on 17 October outside the government building in Nalchik but were prevented from approaching the president's office. Relatives quoted by newsru.com said that the authorities placed guns and grenades next to the bodies of young men who were not practicing Muslims but who were caught in the cross-fire and photographed them as "evidence" that the dead men were militants. The same agency claimed that an unspecified number of the alleged dead militants were shot in the back of the head. "Moscow News" on 18 October quoted Kabardino-Balkaria President Arsen Kanokov as suggesting that the bodies of "people who were used as cannon fodder" should be handed over to their relatives as "an act of humanity, so that cruelty does not engender further cruelty." (RFE/RL)

RUSSIAN GENERALS/LAWMAKERS ARGUE OVER NALCHIK RAID

18 October

Colonel General Vladimir Vasiliev (Unified Russia), the chairman of the Duma Security Committee, said on 16

October on the NTV show "Voskresnyi vecher" that during the recent attacks by insurgents in Nalchik the federal troops reacted better than they had in previous attacks. Army General Nikolai Kovalev, the chairman of the Duma Veterans Committee (Unified Russia), said that it is difficult to fight underground urban guerilla warfare. "During the day these people are normal citizens, but at night they change clothes, take up hidden arms, form small mobile groups, hit their targets, and then transform into civilians," he said. Major General Aleksei Sigutkin (Unified Russia), the first deputy chairman of the Duma Defense Committee, said Russia has a history of failing to stop urban terrorist tactics. He said that "in the 19th century the Tsarist secret police failed for a long time to suppress the revolutionary organization People's Will" and, in the 20th century, the Tsarist police lost the fight to the Bolsheviks, which used the same tactics. Vladimir Solovev, the host of the NTV show "Voskresnyi vecher," said that whatever security experts say, the U.S., British, and Spanish special services managed -- after terrorist attacks in their countries -- to prevent a repetition of them, though their Russian counterparts have been unable to prevent them from occurring. Most terrifying is that in Nalchik the attackers had a chance to seize planes at the airport, to load them with explosives, and take control of the "friend and foe" system which would lead them to their targets, he said. (RFE/RL)

