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**ANALYSIS CENTER  
OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT  
RUSSIAN FEDERATION**

**Department of Ethno-National Relations and Conflict Forecasting**

**The Political Situation in Conflict Zones**

**(A Monthly Monitoring of Events in Zones of Ethno-Political Tension in Russia and the  
Near Abroad)**

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**Introduction**

This is the first issue of this informational bulletin, whose monthly appearance may be seen as one form of monitoring and forecasting the course of events in the conflict zones of Russia and the near abroad. The monitoring is carried out as part of the implementation of an Official Message from the President of Russia. The purpose of the work is to depict the political events and processes which underlie the confrontations between various political, ethnic and regional groups. Monitoring makes it possible to forecast the course of events and to some extent preempt the more dangerous tendencies. This bulletin includes factual information as well as analytical assessments of events and processes which make up the fabric of the conflict situations.

All the conflict zones in the current bulletin are divided into two types: those in which armed battles are occurring with greater or lesser intensity and regularity ("zones of ongoing armed conflicts"), and, those in which there are no such actions but in which there is a dangerous level of ethno-political tension that threatens to escalate into armed conflict. The concept of a "conflict zone" is broadly interpreted and must necessarily include also the power centers of those territories, states and republics, since it is there that the conflicting sides make decisions which are significant for the course of the conflict.

For the May edition of the bulletin we have selected three zones of the first type and six of the second. In future issues, depending on how situations develop, new zones may be added while others may lose their currency as conflict areas.

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## **I. ZONES OF ONGOING CONFLICT**

### **1. The Karabakh Conflict**

The main political events of May in the Karabakh conflict zone centered around the sensational signing of the Bishkek Protocol on the ceasefire in Karabakh. The protocol was initiated by Moscow and signed by the Azerbaijani leadership.

This event was completely unexpected by the majority of local politicians and caused a storm of indignation in the opposition camp. This was reflected mainly in the subsequent zigzags in Baku's management of the Karabakh conflict and also in a toughening of the policy of Aliev and his circle vis-a-vis opposition parties and leaders.

On the eve of the 4 May Bishkek meeting of parliamentary delegations from Azerbaijan, Armenia, Russia and Kyrgyzstan (with participation by representatives of Nagorno-Karabakh), the majority of observers doubted that the head of the Azerbaijani delegation, deputy Azerbaijani Armed Forces chief Afiyaddin Dzhalilov, would sign the conflict management plan proposed by Moscow. Two points contained in the plan emerged as the main stumbling blocks: the symmetrical withdrawal of the forces of both sides from the current front line, and, bringing Russian troops into a liberated buffer zone.

Azerbaijani officials, including Dzhalilov himself, insisted that the dividing line be the Nagorno Karabakh border and not the line of contact of the troops. That is to say that "the unconditional and immediate withdrawal of Armenian troops from all occupied territories" must become a mandatory condition for the start of the peacekeeping process. The prospects for the return of Russian troops to Azerbaijan was another factor in the Baku leadership's rejection, even if the troops were to come under the label of peacekeeping forces: it is widely believed among Azerbaijani politicians that in a critical situation the Russian military will always adopt a pro-Armenian stance, not to mention that the presence in the republic of troops of the former "big brother" represents a potential threat to the republic's real political independence.

Moreover, Azerbaijan's objection was also caused by the readiness on the part of the organizers of the Bishkek meeting (between the chairman of the Council of the CIS Inter-Parliamentary Assembly and the head of the Kyrgyz Parliament Sharimkulov) to give the Nagorno Karabakh delegation full- participant status, including having the deciding vote. The most that Baku would agree to was to grant the Nagorno Karabakh Republic (NKR) the status of "interested party." At the last moment it turned out that the Azerbaijani delegation would be headed not by Parliament Speaker Rasul Guliev but only by his deputy Dzhalilov. Observers interpreted this as a sure sign that Azerbaijan did not intend to make any concessions in Bishkek and that it would essentially reduce its participation in the Bishkek meeting to a formal "courtesy visit" to the Kyrgyz capital.

That was how the situation appeared at first. The negotiations of 4-5 May confirmed the existence of fundamental differences in the positions of the leaders of the Azerbaijani and Russian delegations. Both Vladimir Shumeiko and Vladimir Kazimirov, who is the special Russian Presidential representative on the Karabakh conflict, refused to meet Dzhalilov's demand to include in the meeting's final protocol a clause on the immediate and unconditional withdrawal of Armenian (i.e., Karabakh) forces from the territories they occupied. For this reason Dzhalilov then refused to sign the protocol which called for the sides to cease fire on 9 May. The delegations departed without reaching agreement, and in so doing, it would seem, marked the complete failure of this latest attempt at peaceful control of the conflict.

Nevertheless, four days later there was a sensational announcement from Kazimirov that the Azerbaijani side--this time in the person of Rasul Guliev--had agreed to sign the protocol, introducing only two or three completely inconsequential corrections in the terminology, e.g., "international observers" instead of "observers," a different word for "occupied" in the term "occupied territories," etc. Following that, the defense ministers of Azerbaijan (Mamedrafi Mamedov) and Armenia (Serzh Sarkisyan), as well as the commander of NKR troops (Samvel Babayan) signed a ceasefire agreement which took effect on 12 May. At the same time, reports came in that the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs had begun preparations for a meeting in Moscow between the presidents of Azerbaijan and Armenia, during which a specific mechanism would reportedly be worked out for observing the ceasefire conditions. A timetable would also be established for the withdrawal of troops from occupied territories.

Such a major and unexpected change in the official line (coming apparently from Gejdar Aliev himself) produced shock in the Republic's political circles. The specifics of the new conflict management plan/timetable, made public by Kazimirov, were already of no interest to anyone. The plan called for a six-week-long withdrawal of Armenian forces from all occupied territories

(except Lachin and Shusha, about which negotiations were "only beginning") in exchange for the lifting of the anti-Armenian blockade. But this failed to make Baku officials more favorably disposed towards the plan, despite hopes to the contrary. For the first time in many months, the entire opposition, both the Azerbaijani Popular Front (NA) and its allies, and the Azerbaijani National Independence Party (PNNA), headed by Etibar Mamedov, which had been at odds with one another, came out as an essentially united front against Aliev.

In a special announcement on 13 May the PNNA demanded Guliev's retirement as head of Parliament, accusing him of "national betrayal." According to PNNA assertions, Guliev's signing of the Bishkek Protocol jointly with the representative of the self-proclaimed NKR "will result in international recognition of the NKR, the deployment of Russian troops into the conflict zone, and, consequently, loss of Azerbaijani control over part of its territory." The PNNA demanded that the National Assembly immediately annul Guliev's signature on the Bishkek Protocol and also that President Aliev "express his position on this document."

The leadership and press of the NA, the "Musavat," the Democratic Party and other opposition organizations lodged analogous protests and accusations. Authorities responded with increased repression: there were immediate searches and pogroms in the headquarters of the opposition parties (PNNA on May 13 and 20, "Musavat" on 21 May). There was an immediate increase in the censorship and confiscation of opposition publications, and there had already been rampant censorship and confiscation in recent months. (According to a statement by the editorial staff of the NA newspaper *Azadlyg*, recently, i.e., in April and the first half of May, nine of its issues did not appear at all due to censorship, and in more than 20 issues critical materials had to be replaced due to censor demands.) On 12 May a group of armed police "visited" the editorial staff of the PNNA newspaper *Millet*, and on 14 May police workers, citing the appropriate order of the Mayor of Baku, required the editors of *Azadlyg* and the information agency "Turan" to vacate the premises they were occupying. On 15 May, under pressure from authorities, the independent, private television company BMTI ceased operation.

The actions of the authorities pulled the opposition together in Parliament. On 18 May, after failing to get the Bishkek Protocol issue into the session of the Milli Medzhlis, 17 deputies from opposition parties (NA, PNNA, "Musavat," and others) left the hall, depriving Parliament of a quorum (the Milli Medzhlis has only 50 members, and it takes 34 to make a quorum). One of the leaders of the anti-Aliev opposition in Parliament believes that Aliev's response to this opposition action may be to dissolve Milli Medzhlis.

Nevertheless, the unanimity of the opposition politicians in rejecting the Bishkek agreement did have a certain effect. Without removing its signature from the Protocol, the Azerbaijani leadership nevertheless slowed down the intended process of moving closer to Russia on the Karabakh issue. First, the issue of a meeting between Aliev and Armenian President Ter-Petrosyan was immediately dropped from the agenda. Second, and most important, at a Moscow meeting on 16-17 June between military bodies of Azerbaijan, Armenia, the NKR and Russia, the Azerbaijani defense minister suddenly refused to sign a key protocol which defined the sequence for separating the troops and bringing Russian peacekeeping troops into the conflict zone. Thus the entire Bishkek peacekeeping plan was jeopardized. It is worth noting that on 16 May the Azerbaijani defense minister Mamedov made it clear that he had come to Moscow

intent on signing the Moscow Protocol, but on the morning of 17 May he had a lengthy telephone conversation with President Aliiev who ordered him to return to Baku immediately. Mamedov himself then explained that this was for "additional study of certain issues." Russian intermediary Kazimirov then hastily departed for Baku, apparently in hopes of convincing Aliiev not to disrupt implementation of the peace plan. On 19 May Mamedov returned to Moscow, this time with a proposal to link the troop separation timetable with a general plan for political management of the conflict, which, in turn, would have to be sanctioned by the combatants "at the highest level," i.e., at a summit, a summit which is unlikely to take in the foreseeable future. In this way the opposition did manage to get what it wanted, forcing Aliiev to perform another political pirouette and make concessions to the implacable nationalist radicals.

It follows that from now on, Aliiev, if he does not give up on his efforts to end to the Karabakh war, will have to get involved even more "closely" with the opposition, replacing the tactics of applying "moderate pressure" on his opponents with a policy of total and obdurate repression. Events, apparently imminent events, will reveal whether or not he has sufficient strength and determination. In attempting to play its nationalistic card, it is possible that the opposition is making a fatal error, i.e, it is by no means guaranteed the support of a populous now utterly exhausted by the six-year war. The circumstance, which in the tide of the "anti-Bishkek movement" succeeded in bringing together nearly all opposition forces, is of little significance in a country where the overwhelming majority of the people are actually quite removed from politics and are more inclined to trust charismatic personalities, such as a "wise national father figure" type like Aliiev, than the colorless functionaries of the countless "parties" and "movements" which can scarcely be told apart.

In the meantime, as political passions seethed in Baku, in Stepanakert, capitalizing on the relative calm on the Karabakh front, local politicians continued to work on developing state sovereignty, which so far remains unrecognized by anyone but which is becoming increasingly likely. On 21 May State Defense Committee Chair Kocharjan and Foreign Affairs Minister Gukasyan held a press conference devoted to the recent visit of an NKR delegation to Crimea. It was reported that in the course of the visit and negotiations with Crimean Republic President Meshkov, the leaders of both rebel republics signed an accord on the basic principles for cooperation in the areas of economics and trade as well in social and cultural areas. When asked about the possibility of similar contacts between the NKR and two other republics, both of which are unrecognized in post-Soviet territory--the Dniester Republic and the Abkhazian Republic--Kocharjan assured reporters that "serious work is being conducted to that end." He further stated that a meeting between Karabakh representatives and the President of the Moldovan Dniester Republic (MDR) had already taken place and that there would probably be such a meeting with Abkhaz leaders in the very near future.

## **2. The Abkhazian Conflict**

The main event of the month in this conflict zone was the Abkhaz-Georgian agreement signed in Moscow on 14 May and the subsequent reactions to it Tbilisi political circles. This agreement, mediated by Russia, calls for a ceasefire and for a separation of forces.

The document, signed on the Georgian side by Dzhaba Ioseliani and on the Abkhaz side by Sokrat Dzhindzholiya, develops and specifies mutual conditions for separating the troops. These conditions had been set in a previous Moscow accord on 4 April. Of the seven clauses in the latest agreement, the second is of greatest practical significance since it details the procedure, conditions and timetable for separating the opposing forces and bringing peacekeeping forces into the liberated zone (formally they would be CIS forces, but in actuality they would be Russian troops).

The signed document calls for the creation of two zones between the separated sides, a "safety zone" in which there are to be no armed forces whatsoever, and a "limited arms zone" from which heavy combat hardware is to be removed (i.e., artillery pieces, heavy mortars, all tanks and BTRs). Hardware removed will be stored at specifically designated locations which UN military observers will monitor. In addition, the agreement calls for the disbanding and withdrawing from Abkhazia of all "voluntary formations composed of persons who arrived from outside Abkhaz borders," (which clearly applies to volunteers from the Northern Caucasus and to regular Georgian units). The Georgian troops located in Kodor Canyon (mountainous Abkhazia) must be withdrawn under the control of observers--armed conflicts continue there at this writing. The basic function of CIS peacekeeping forces and international UN observers must be to prevent armed conflicts and to block preparation for such conflicts. They would also provide for the safe and unhindered return of Georgian refugees to the areas of Abkhazia they had inhabited, chiefly the most southerly Gal' area. If attacked or subjected to "direct military threat," the peacekeeping forces have the right to take "appropriate measures for safety and self-defense." The local police remaining in the safety zones or limited arms zones are allowed to have only personal weapons.

Also detailed is the temporary timetable for separating the troops and bringing in peacekeeping forces and observers--the entire procedure is to be completed by mid-June. However, without waiting for the implementation of this timetable or even the conclusion of the talks, efforts in Tbilisi aimed at breaking the Moscow agreement were markedly increased.

On 13 May, even before the agreement was signed, in a closed session of the Georgian Parliament the majority voted not to give the Georgian delegation to the Moscow talks the right to sign any documents without first obtaining Parliamentary approval to do so. In a speech at the end of the day Georgian head-of-state Eduard Shevardnadze strongly objected, observing that this decision by Parliament showed distrust of his policy. In this same connection he recommended that the elimination of the post of head-of-state be discussed in the days immediately ahead, which would mean, in effect, his retirement. The purpose of this political move is sufficiently transparent: in order to change the constitutional provision on the head-of-state, a two-thirds majority of Parliament is required, and, given authority which Shevardnadze still enjoys, this is absolutely unrealistic.

The strongest attack on the Moscow agreement was launched by the chairman of the Abkhazian Liberation Union, representative Boris Kakubava, a well-known supporter of "decisive measures" in the Abkhazian issue. At a press conference on 16 May he characterized the agreement as a "capitulation." He announced that the Union he heads has filed an action with the Georgian Supreme Court seeking to have criminal charges brought against Shevardnadze and the

people who signed this agreement, accusing them of treason in the form of "collusion with Russia." He declared that if the Georgian Parliament does not quickly repudiate the Moscow agreements on Abkhazia of 4 April and 14 May, then, for Georgia, Abkhazia will be "lost forever." Kakubava warned that his supporters and all genuine patriots of Georgia will begin mass protest actions: "We do not plan to wage war, but we also do not intend to give up Abkhazia."

The "Abkhazian Liberation Union" is made up of 16 political parties formed primarily by Georgian inhabitants of Abkhazia, of nearly all those who have been turned into refugees and also those who fear that Abkhazia (at least most of it) will be closed to them forever. Not only is this Union against the Moscow agreement, but many other influential parties and leaders have come out against it as well.

On 19 May in a Georgian television broadcast, the chairman of the Georgian Popular Front and head of the Parliamentary committee on international affairs Notar Natadze called the agreement on Abkhazia a capitulation. On the same day, parliamentary factions of the Republican Party and the Merab Kostava Society demonstratively left the Georgian Parliament hall. In explaining this step, the leader of the Republican Party Ivlian Khaindrava stated that the Moscow agreement, which recognizes the Inguri River as the troop separation line, has in fact created a border between Georgia and Abkhazia, i.e., that it has legally reinforced the result of Georgia's military defeat--tearing it away from Abkhazia. Reminding everyone that all past agreements with Abkhazia have subsequently been used by the Abkhaz side to increase its military expansion--under Russia's sponsorship--Khaindrava concluded that now the permissive policy of Georgian authorities had entered a new phase, i.e., lending the support of law to the results of this expansion. At the same time, the Georgian leadership is turning out to be "putty in the hands of those whose goal-oriented politics will lead to the disintegration of Georgia." In the opinion of the leader of the Republican Party, in this issue the parliamentary majority has "adopted the position of washing their hands" of the matter.

A day after the demand that Shevardnadze retire (because he has supposedly "exhausted the trust of the residents of Georgia"), one of the leaders of the opposition, Iraklij Tsereteli, the chairman of the National Independence Party, appeared on television. Should Shevardnadze refuse to go, Tsereteli promised to organize a mass demonstration of protest during Georgia's Independence Day festivities on 26 May.

Other parties and organizations have also confirmed their rejection of the Moscow accord, including the National Democratic Party, which in the past had supported Shevardnadze. However, in recent months, after Shevardnadze agreed to bringing Russian troops into Georgia and after the signing of the 4 April Moscow agreement, which many in Tbilisi view as a humiliating one, this party has moved almost completely into the opposition camp. Within the variegated political spectrum of Georgia, there are also parties and leaders who supported the head-of-state's course in the Abkhazian issue, or, at least, they refrained from any public protests. These include primarily the Union of Georgian Citizens, which is considered the "Shevardnadze party." This organization's general secretary is Zurab Zhvaniya (former head of the "Green Party," and he has even suggested imposing a moratorium on any public discussion in Parliament of questions concerning Abkhazia because passions then become so inflamed that they "interfere

with normal work." A faction of the liberal party basically supported him, declaring that if there should be a vote on taking away the Georgian delegation's authority in the Abkhazian talks, then the liberals would simply ignore the vote. The talks absolutely must go on, said liberal faction representative Lala Gogoberidze, because "Russia has altered its attitude towards our country and now likes the idea of a strong and independent Georgia."

It must however be noted that the parties who objected to the Moscow agreement are considerably more popular on the whole than those supporting Shevardnadze's course aimed at achieving peace in Abkhazia at any price. Thus, according to a survey of Tbilisi residents conducted during the first two weeks of May by the firm "InformService," the National Democratic Party (headed by Georgij Chanturiya) enjoys the highest popularity rating, with 46% of Tbilisians rating its activities positively. In second place was the Republican Party (one of its better known leaders is Ivlian Khaindrava), with 35.4% of the respondents assigning it a positive rating. In third place was the Popular Front (headed by Notar Natadze) with 37.7%. All these parties and their leaders are in the front ranks of the opposition to Shevardnadze's Abkhazian politics. In that case, if one is to believe this poll, the pro-Shevardnadze Georgian Citizens' Union is only in ninth place, and the Social Democratic Party, which openly insists on a pro-Russian orientation for Georgia, is 15th.

But on a practical, political level, all this has little meaning. The paradox of Georgian political life is that Shevardnadze, who wisely remains "outside of parties," is still felt by the majority of the Georgian people to be the leader of the nation, the only alternative. Indicative in this regard is that despite the fact that many war-oriented opposition members called for mass protests on Independence Day 26 May, the celebration passed completely calmly and peacefully with a parade unclouded by protest and an artillery salute. The only way in which the opposition showed its "decisive protest" was by its non-participation in the formal acts of the celebration, and it is doubtful that the public even noticed. Another factor which probably played into the hands of the government: it was the Zviadist <sup>1</sup> "Free Georgia Round Table" organization (unexpectedly "risen from the ashes") which took up the initiative for arranging the protest rally. In response to the emergence of its avowed enemies, the National Democratic Party deemed it beneficial to issue a call to all its colleagues in the battle against the "mentality of capitulation and agreement": refrain from participation in any large rallies or parades in order not to exacerbate an already complicated political situation.

An indirect assessment of Eduard Shevardnadze's hold on the post of head-of-state can be seen in the results of a poll conducted at the end of May (after the signing of Moscow accord). This poll was conducted by the social-service newspaper *Resonance*. (Keep in mind, however, that the poll was taken only among residents of the Georgian capital). In response to the question of whether there might be a change in leadership before the current term is up, only 14% responded that it is possible for the people to demand such a change; an additional 37.5% was inclined to admit that this could happen if Parliament so decides or under pressure from opposition political forces; and 39.6% felt that there would be no change in leadership whatsoever before the end of the term. That is to say, the latter felt that Shevardnadze would not retire early.

Be that as it may, the process of implementing the Moscow agreement by the end of the month has entered a practical phase. After completion of the necessary coordination and technical

consultations, a group of military experts arrived in Gudauta on 26 May to carry out preparatory work for deployment of the peacekeeping forces, whose strength, by treaty, is to be 3000. Later that day, troop commanders arrived in Zugdidi (near the line of contact of Georgian and Abkhaz troops--a line that is destined to become the unofficial border between Georgia and Abkhazia); these are the leaders whose units at the beginning of June will occupy take up along the Ingura River for peacekeeping purposes. These commanders were accompanied by representatives of the Russian military command and the Georgian power ministries. On the eve of this event, according to reports from Abkhazian sources, intensive armed clashes took place between Georgian and Abkhaz forces in Kodor Canyon. However, there is now every reason to hope that these will be the last echoes of the Abkhazian war.

### **3. The Tajik Conflict**

In May, during negotiations already underway, the two opposing sides declared their readiness to make every effort towards a peaceful settlement of the internal Tajik conflict. But in fact they were making efforts in a diametrically opposite directions, with each side attempting to fortify its own positions and resolve the conflict to its own advantage.

To a significant degree, the direct armed confrontation has moved from the territory of Tajikistan to the northern areas of Afghanistan, where it has become closely interwoven with the local civil strife that has gone on in the area for more than ten years. For several months, the former senior official of the pro-communist Afghan regime--Tashkent's close ally General Rashid Dustum--together with the supporters of Gulbetdin Khekmattiar have been conducting large-scale combat actions against troops loyal to Afghan President Burhanuddin Rabbani. As it turns out, the largest camps of Tadjik refugees from the former Kurgan-Tyubin region are located in a combat zone.

Tadjik refugees have largely been forced out of those camps which are under the control of Dustum's troops and are compelled to make their way across the Pyandzh River to Tajik territory. Recently camps which are outside the direct control of Dustum forces are increasingly subject to air and artillery strikes. Thus, on 15-16 May when Dustum troops were storming the city of Kunduz, Tajik camps located nearby sustained a massive air strike.

Once again finding themselves in a combat zone, Tajik refugees are increasingly being forced to return to their homeland. It is no accident that the Tajik Minister of Labor and Employment, Shukurdzhon Zuhurov, who heads the Tajik government delegation at negotiations with the opposition, went to Afghanistan to see Dustum for talks on the problem of the return of refugees.

The problem of Tajik refugees in other CIS countries is also becoming a cause for concern, and this is particularly true in Russia where there are more such refugees than anywhere else. (In May, for example, 250 refugees from the former Kurgan-Tyubinsk region in the south of Tajikistan were removed from Ekaterinenburg.) On 30 May under the aegis of the UN a joint commission on refugees set to work in Moscow; this commission grew out of an agreement reached at the first round of the Tajik-Tajik talks. Several factors make it likely that most of the Tajik refugees will be forced to return to their homeland: the refugees' unsettled condition (homeless and jobless) in Russian cities; the fact that it will be nearly impossible for them to

adapt to conditions foreign to them, and; the fact that local authorities do not wish to solve the problems of these non-Russian newcomers. In this regard, time will work in favor of correcting the problem.

It is possible that Dushanbe is in no hurry to start the new round of talks set for the beginning of June in Teheran. After a report that the Iranian side was moving the talks to a later date, Dushanbe made a counterproposal to postpone them until the end of the month. Specifically for purposes of getting [Tajik Supreme Council Chairman] Rakhmonov to agree to continue the talks, Marrak Goulding, a representative of the UN Secretary General, was in Dushanbe on 27-28 May. After many hours of discussions with the chairman of the Supreme Council, the date for the start of the talks was set at 14 June.

It is possible that either the talks will not take place at all, or that they will be of no significance. One indication for this is the Tajik government's accelerated preparation for adopting a new constitution, the draft of which was not published until the beginning of May due to a paper shortage. A Headquarters for Discussion of the Draft Version of the Constitution has been created in Tajikistan, and working groups have been sent to all areas of the Republic in order to clarify its basic provisions, including to Badakhshan. The draft version calls for the restoration of the post of President. At the same time it also contains sufficiently broad authority for the new Parliament, which as before, will be non-professional one. All ministerial appointments will have to be confirmed by Parliament.

The government sees no obstacles to the adoption of the new constitution at the next session of the Supreme Council in July. The Center for Coordination of Tajik Democratic Forces in CIS Countries issued a statement that any discussion of the Draft of the new Constitution would be illegal until such time as all refugees return to country and full functioning of all political forces is assured. In response to this, Abdumadzhid Dostiev, first deputy to the chairman of the Supreme Council, noted that all together there are only about 5,000 Tajiks in CIS countries and 27,000 in Afghanistan.

Recently the armed opposition, which is limited in its actions on Afghan territory since the advent of Dustum, has been increasingly adopting the tactics of guerilla warfare and terror in the interior regions of Tajikistan. At the same time, it should be remembered that because there are so many weapons and so many criminal elements within the Republic, it is not always possible to determine exactly who carried out any given terrorist action. Thus, for example, in Dushanbe on 19 May the executive secretary of the Republican newspaper *Dzhumkhuriyat (Republic)*, Khushbakht Khajdarsho, was killed. Khajdarsho was known not only for his anti-Islamic position but also for his articles directed at the wheeler-dealers in shady business activities. After a raid by government forces on the mountainous regions east of Dushanbe, on 25 May the director of the Garm regional branch of the Security Ministry, Gurugli Kadyrov, was killed.

Increasingly, Russian military personnel are becoming the target of terrorists. The press services of the 201st Motorized Rifle Division, the Combined Peacekeeping Force (KMS) of the CIS and of the Russian border troops regularly report on the repelling of attempts of opposition militants to penetrate the border and also on the large-scale advances in various directions which these militants are preparing. However, significantly more Russian military personnel perish deep

inside Tajik territory than on its borders. On 24 May a LTC Vladimir Borisenkov of the Russian Border Troops in Tajikistan was killed in Dushanbe. On 29 May in Badakhshan a member of the Russian border troops was shot in the back at his unit's base camp. He died from his wounds. In order to underscore the alienation and distance of Russian military personnel from internal Tajik confrontations, the new commander of the CIS Combined Peacekeeping Force Valerij Patrikeev directed that Tajik Armed Forces units be removed from this Combined Force.

In mid-May Russian border troops in a joint action with the KMS and units of the power ministries of Tajikistan conducted an operation to clear the border areas of [opposition] fighters. The most inaccessible areas were hit with massive fire strikes which included the use of helicopters.

The central government in Dushanbe continues its gradual loss of control of certain areas of the country. This is especially noticeable in the west along the border with Uzbekistan where there are areas densely populated by Uzbeks. Throughout the first half of May there was a confrontation between government forces and local--primarily Uzbek--authorities in the west part of the Gissar Valley. The latter even threatened to block all movement along the railroad to Dushanbe. The Uzbek-Tajik confrontation in Afghanistan, the appearance of the same sort of hot spots even on the territory of Tajikistan itself, the fact that Tashkent's primary ally--the Khodzha Clan--has been forced out of power by the Klyabs who control all important government posts--all this forces the Uzbek regime to seek new footing. It is possible that the Pamirs could become this source of support, i.e., Tashkent could try to restore the former system of "separation of powers" which existed in Tajikistan in the Soviet era. At that time nearly all leading government posts were held by Khodzhas, and all power organs were under the control of the Pamirs.

At the beginning of May, at the initiative of the Tajik Ministry of Security, much publicity was given to the fact that an Uzbek military transport plane had delivered cargo to Khorog. Not only did the Uzbek side not deny this, it even announced that it was rendering humanitarian aid to Badakhshan, and this included using the highway that connects Khorog with the Fergana Valley. Tashkent did however insist that the flight was carried out with the permission of the government of Tajikistan, an assertion that was denied by Tajik Security Minister Saidamir Zukhurov.

Central Tajik authorities are also attempting to establish contacts with the Badakhshan-ites. In May the personal secretary of the leader of the Ismail world Aga-khan IV Tadzhi Mit visited Dushanbe. Aga-khan enjoys great authority in Badakhshan, to which he is promising substantial financial assistance. Contacts between Aga-khan and Tajik authorities are a continuation of the series of visits high-ranking Tajik officials to Switzerland which took place last year. It is there that the headquarters of the Ismail world is located.

The exacerbation of the situation in western Tajikistan, the publicity surrounding Uzbekistan's

assistance to Badakhshan, a place which Dushanbe cannot control, and the increasing terrorism against Russian military personnel--all of this probably was the reason for the Tajik's Supreme Council Chairman Emomali Rakhmonov's hasty visit to Moscow. On 6 May in the course of a single day he met with Boris Yeltsin, Victor Chernomyrdin and Andrei Kozyrev. The Russian President again confirmed that Moscow was and remains an ally of the current regime in Dushanbe.

## **II. POTENTIAL CONFLICT ZONES**

### **1. Chechnya**

May in Chechnya saw increased tension in the relations between President Dudaev and the opposition. One factor fueling this tension is the difference of opinion within the Moscow leadership as to whether it is necessary to enter into formal talks with Chechnya and also with whom to hold such talks--with Dudaev or with the opposition.

In the opinion of Vice-Premier Sergej Shakhraj, who until recently was Minister for Nationality Affairs, there should be no talks with Dudaev, at least not until democratic elections of a new Parliament are held in Chechnya (Dudaev forcibly dissolved the previous Parliament in June of last year). And for the time being, consultations should take place with all the political forces in Chechnya, including opposition forces. By the end of May, the prevailing thinking in the administration of the Russian Federation (RF) President the prevailing thinking was that official talks with the Chechen leadership were imminent and that the partner in the talks should be Dudaev himself. Shakhraj's retirement from the post of Nationalities Minister apparently encouraged Dudaev somewhat and at the same time also caused the opposition to act more decisively.

In early May the so-called Chechen Provisional Council (which was created in December of 1993 and includes most opposition parties and movements, including "Marsho," "Dajmokhk" and others) announced that it is "taking responsibility" for holding the talks with the RF leadership. According to Umar Avturkhanov, a national referendum should decide whether the Chechen Republic should or should not join the Russian Federation. (Avturkhanov is Chairman of the Provisional Council and heads the administration of the Nadterechny area, an area not subordinate to Dudaev.) A condition for conducting this referendum is to be the formation of constitutional bodies of power through free democratic elections.

Implicit (and sometimes explicit) in all this is that Dudaev will have to be forced from his post, in the extreme case by force of arms. Only then will it be possible for a transitional government appointed by the Provisional Council to begin preparations for parliamentary elections. Most probably the new Parliament will be bi-cameral, with the upper house made up of elders of each tribe and the lower of elected representatives from voting districts of equal-sized populations. The post of President of the Chechen Republic is not even mentioned in the Provisional Council's draft plan [of the Constitution].

Of course, Dudaev has only contempt for these opposition proposals and rejects them all. He has declared the members of the Provisional Council to be enemies of the Chechen people and

agents of imperialistic Moscow forces. For a long time Dzhokhar Dudaev diplomatically avoided including RF President Boris Yeltsin in this latter group, affirming his willingness to meet with Yeltsin on an official level as the "president of a neighboring state" (moreover, the Kremlin itself neither confirmed nor denied rumors about a meeting between the two Presidents that was supposedly being planned).

The situation changed considerably after the 27 May assassination attempt on Dudaev. As Dudaev's motorcade moved along, a vehicle parked alongside the road and loaded with explosives, blew up. The President himself was not injured, but two people in a different car did die--Interior Minister Magomed Eldiev and his deputy Said-Ali Bataev. President Dudaev, saved by some miracle, instituted a curfew in Chechnya that same day.

According to reports of Chechen officials, experts determined that devices similar [to the one used in this attempt] are "used for attacks and terrorism" by Russian special forces. This was followed by an official Grozny statement which said that "veiling itself in lies about democracy, the leadership of Russia is systematically and purposefully working to undermine the sovereignty of Chechnya." And even though Yeltsin was not directly named as the organizer of this "undermining," it appears that Grozny has now finally buried any hopes of separating the "good" Yeltsin from the "bad" people who surround him.

Former Speaker of the RF Supreme Soviet Ruslan Khasbulatov moved to Chechnya several months ago after his release from a Moscow prison, and in the eyes of many Chechens he nearly became a new, alternative "leader of the nation," an alternative to Dudaev. But in May Khasbulatov decided it would be to his advantage to return to Moscow, thus dashing the hopes of the Chechen opposition that they had found in him a powerful new ally in the struggle against Dudaev. At a minimum he has removed himself from the political struggle for the near future. And there is now no reason even to discuss the possibility that Khasbulatov might move closer to Dudaev, which the latter had been counting on heavily--he had invited Khasbulatov to Chechnya and had "forgiven" him for his earlier "pro-imperialistic" statements. In an interview which Khasbulatov gave in May to the newspaper *Nezavisimaja gazeta (The Independent)*, he stated that the present Chechen Republic regime "is bringing colossal harm to the people," and he compared the consequences of Dudaev's leadership with the results of the 1944 deportation. "At the present time, freedom for the people is completely out of the question: children are not learning; the sick are not being treated; unemployment is 60%; people are not receiving their pensions; there are no salaries, and so on." That is how Khasbulatov summed up of his first-hand knowledge of Chechnya's sovereignty, and he affirmed his prior opinion that the Chechen Republic should once again become part of the Russian Federation.

Moscow appears to be taking the "Khasbulatov factor" sufficiently seriously. Many experts are inclined to believe that Dudaev's time is running out and that the Russian leadership will soon have to decide which opposition official to place its bets on. Considering the events in Russia's political life during the past two years, it is clear that the former speaker of the "rebellious" Supreme Soviet is not likely to be the choice of official "Yeltsin" Moscow.

## **2. Northern Ossetia and Ingushetia**

In the Ossetia-Ingushetia zone there is continued ethno-political tension which is connected with the unwieldy problem of the status of Prigorodnyj Rayon in Northern Ossetia and the fate of tens of thousands of Ingush refugees who left there after the armed clashes of the fall of 1992. The main catalyst of tension in May was the incident on the 5th involving the seizure of six Ingush hostages, residents of the village of Karec who were on their way to Nazran for a medical check-up. The soon-to-be hostages were travelling in an official vehicle of the Provisional Administration of the state-of-emergency area when the terrorist act occurred. According to reports from the Ministry of Internal Affairs (MVD) of the Republic of Northern Ossetia (RNO), the vehicle and hostages were captured by relatives of Ossetians who had been shot to death earlier by Ingush fighters.

The President of the Republic of Ingushetia (RI) Ruslan Aushev issued a special statement demanding the immediate intervention of central and Ossetian authorities in order to free the hostages. Aushev added that the practice of taking hostages has now become a "routine occurrence," as has the burning of Ingush homes in Prigorodnyj Rayon. Under these conditions, in Aushev's opinion, the Provisional Administration is not coping with the tasks entrusted to it. He reminded everyone that in accordance with the Decree of the RF President of 13 December '93, all refugees on the territory of the RI and RNO must be returned to the areas which they permanently occupied prior to 30 Jun 94. The Provisional Administration has prepared a draft version of an RF Presidential Decree on the next extension of the state-of-emergency in the conflict zone. In his statement, Aushev demanded that this draft version add a reference to the above 13 Dec 93 RF Presidential Decree.

Another incident in May which affected the inter-ethnic situation in the state-of-emergency zone was the murder on Ingush territory of eight Georgian citizens who were working on the construction of a branch of the Trans-Caucasian highway. According to reports from local authorities later confirmed by the RI MVD, the trail of the murders supposedly leads to the village of Tarskoe, which is the base of operations of one group of Ossetian fighters. It is widely believed in Ingushetia that this act was aimed at causing tension in Ingush-Georgian relations which until now have remained extremely friendly, since the Ingush have always refused to participate in military actions against Georgia in the Abkhazian and South Ossetian conflicts. If this was indeed the purpose of the killings, it did not succeed. Apparently the only political consequence was the retirement of President Ruslan Aushev's brother, RI Internal Affairs Minister Bashir Aushev. Evidently a decision was made to hold him responsible for this occurrence.

### **3. Crimea**

In May the crisis around Crimea developed following a series (in April) of unarmed Russian-Ukrainian clashes and a series of provocations in the Black Sea Fleet (BSF) of the former USSR. These provocations were accompanied by an appeal from an element of the BSF command group to the authorities and to Russian public opinion. The BSF press center adopted a clearly anti-Ukrainian position and disseminated information that had not always been verified, which heightened the tension in Russian-Ukrainian relations.

Running parallel to the above, the Crimean administration headed by the newly elected President of Crimea Yuriy Meshkov, and also the Supreme Soviet of Crimea--all have chosen to distance themselves from Ukraine and seek closer relations with Russia. In the Supreme Soviet, the supporters of a pro-Russian orientation won the majority (Meshkov's colleague in the Russian Party of Crimea-Russian Movement in Crimea [RPK-RDK] Sergej Tsekov was elected Supreme Soviet Chairman; elected as his deputies were Aleksej Mel'nikov--deputy director of the RPK-RDK and commander of a BSF air force unit--and Viktor Mezhak, chairman of the People's Party, whose largest faction "Russia" has 47 members).

An analysis of existing information gives reason to believe that the Crimean authorities were expecting a worsening of its already complicated relations with Kiev and also counting on Russia's active intervention in the conflict on the Crimean side. Looking at the overall mechanisms of the crisis, it must be noted that only the conflicts and clashes made it possible for the Crimean authorities, who have now come into power, to implement their programmatic goals. If they had not taken advantage of the tension in order to separate, then how else would it have been possible for them to further "distance" the peninsula from the Ukraine? In a stable environment they could scarcely have hoped to convince the Ukrainian government to reject internationally recognized borders and recognize a self-proclaimed republic as an independent entity in international relations. On several occasions the administration of the President of Crimea has put out information that Ukrainian troops and national guardsmen have supposedly begun to move in the direction of Simferopol and Sevastopol. Meshkov has also made many statements to the effect that it would be impossible for Russia to refuse "to participate in stabilizing the situation and in stabilizing relations between the Kiev and Crimean administrations." Both of the aforementioned facts are evidence that Crimea wishes to force Russia to come out in support of the separatist-oriented Crimean Republic.

Having chosen a confrontational policy, at the beginning of the month President Meshkov published a decree "On the National Holiday--Constitution Day of the Crimean Republic." The decree emphasized that creating a new holiday confirms the "historical importance of the 6 May 1992 acceptance of the Constitution of the Crimean Republic." This constitution reinforced the independence of Crimea from Ukraine. Later (September '92) corrections were introduced according to which the Republic of Crimea is considered an inseparable part of the state of Ukraine (after all, at that time a Ukrainian law had been passed "On the Limiting of Authority Between the Bodies of State Power of Ukraine and the Crimean Republic"). On 6 May there was a demonstration and rally organized by the authorities. The rally and demonstration were devoted to the second anniversary of Crimea's May constitution, and approximately 10,000 people took part. Carrying a Crimean flag, Meshkov himself marched in the first column of the parade. Parade participants carried Crimean Republic flags, Russian imperial standards, portraits of Meshkov, and banners supporting the anti-Ukrainian policy of the new Crimean administration.

In efforts to create a legal basis for Crimean independence, Crimean authorities are preparing a set of documents intended to bolster their policy. On 10 May the first session of the new members of the Crimean Supreme Soviet got underway, and on 13 May, after a settling basic organizational issues, there was a meeting of the Presidium of Crimea's Supreme Soviet. At that meeting it was agreed to adopt a recommendation on the part of the Crimean Parliament's new speaker, i.e., to include the following issues in the agenda: "The Restoration of the Constitution

of the Crimean Republic of May 6, 1992"; "Citizenship in the Republic of Crimea," and; "Drafting Crimean Citizens into Military Service." To facilitate the passage of new legislation in the Supreme Soviet, the Presidium recommended changing Crimean Parliament procedures, i.e., allowing constitutional changes with approval of 50% of the deputies as opposed to the current two-thirds requirement.

At the same time, steps were taken to provide organizational support to the planned changes in the status of the Crimean Republic and its relations with Kiev. These steps primarily affected regional force structures (internal affairs bodies and security services) which by order of Meshkov had been removed from Kiev's control and reshaped into republic ministries.

Reorganizing Crimean force structures, which violates the law on the delineation of authority between the organs of state power of Ukraine and Crimea, caused a marked escalation of tension in the relations between Simferopol and Kiev. Attempting to avert a potentially uncontrollable course of events, the Ukraine government countermanded the decision of the Crimean president. On 18 May Kravchuk signed his decree "On the Main MVD Directorate of the Ukraine in Crimea." This decree noted that in accordance with Article 114-5 of the Constitution of Ukraine, the MVD of Crimea is reorganized into the Main MVD Directorate of Ukraine in Crimea and is directly subordinate to the MVD of the Ukraine. At the same time decrees were issued on reorganizing of the Crimean Security Services and Justice Ministries into the main Ukraine directorates of the appropriate agencies in Crimea. On the same day representatives of central force structures were dispatched to Simferopol, including the deputy minister of internal affairs General-Colonel Valentin Nedrigajlo, in order to implement the decrees of the Ukrainian president.

The majority of the Crimean Supreme Soviet decided to further aggravate relations with Kiev. They did so because they did not wish to carry out the decisions of the central Ukraine authorities and also because they were under pressure from Meshkov, who was telling them that Ukrainian forces were approaching Simferopol and that "a virtual war with Ukraine" was about to begin. On 20 May, with a vote of 69 to 2 (and 2 abstentions), the Crimean Parliament passed a law "On the Restoration of the Constitutional Bases of the Statehood of the Republic of Crimea," which called for the full restoration of the 6 May '92 version of the Crimean constitution. The entire Crimean Tartar faction refused to participate in the vote. As the Crimean Tartar deputies pointed out: "the Supreme Soviet of Crimea has taken this first step in order to destabilize the political situation not only in Crimea but also in Ukraine as a whole," and they decided not to take part in "such a questionable political action."

In response to Crimea's becoming sovereign, the Ukrainian Parliament gave the Supreme Soviet of Crimea ten days to rescind its decision about reinstating the constitution of 6 May '92. The Crimean Supreme Soviet, in turn, suspended any action based on the Ukrainian Supreme Soviet decision. After a three-day "war of resolutions," in a closed session the Ukrainian legislators formed a 10-member parliamentary commission and invited a Crimean parliamentary delegation to come to Kiev. The Crimean commission was headed by Sergej Tsekov and the Ukrainian commission by communist faction member Boris Olejnik. The result of the consultations was the establishment of inter-parliamentary contacts. However, no practical decisions were made.

During this same period Russian-Ukrainian talks got underway in Moscow and the Prime Minister level, and an important result was a general easing of tensions in bilateral relations and increased consultations on the problem of dividing up the Black Sea Fleet and its coastal infrastructure. However, this meeting also brought no specific accords on the problems being discussed, largely due to the sides' differences on the basing of Ukrainian and Russian BSF units. Nevertheless, the Russian Federation's considered opinion and the Ukraine's efforts to act within the bounds of the constitutional process both had the effect of reducing the acuteness of the crisis which was had started to enter a protracted phase.

At the end of the 10-day period given to the Crimean Supreme Soviet to rescind its decision, the Ukrainian Parliament returned to examining the Crimean question. On 31 May, in a closed session of Parliament, Leonid Kravchuk made an extensive presentation. He pointed out that there were now forces in power in Crimea whose goal is to separate Crimea from Ukraine and that these forces are working on two different fronts, i.e., they are attempting to achieve sovereignty for their peninsula, and they are seeking recognition of Crimea as a member of the CIS. Both of these approaches were seen by the Ukrainian president as contrary to the country's constitution and as void of any potential for success. Kravchuk recommended seeking a solution to the crisis within the framework defined by the Ukrainian constitution, and he called upon the members of Parliament to elect a constitutional court as quickly as possible and to submit the "Crimean question" to its review.

Debates on the presentation by the President of the Supreme Soviet of the Ukraine reflected the deputies' efforts to resolve the confrontational situation centered around the Crimea. The debates also reflected their efforts to make use of the problem in the internal political battle on the eve of the upcoming presidential elections. A significant number of members were against Kravchuk's constitutional court recommendation, accusing the president of avoiding personal responsibility for defending the constitution.

An insignificantly small number of parliament members (55 people) supported a proposal of radical deputies from the Ukrainian National Association-Ukrainian National Self-Defense Organization to dissolve parliament and introduce direct presidential government in Ukraine. The majority voted to give Kravchuk one week to develop and submit to the Supreme Soviet specific steps for overcoming the crisis.

The Crimean crisis resonated throughout the world. The leadership of nearly all leading western governments came out in defense of Ukraine's territorial integrity. Turkish President Demirel, who was in Ukraine for a visit, supported the actions of the Ukrainian authorities. He made it clear that his country has a stake in maintaining stability in the region not only as a neighboring state in which live approximately 5 million descendants of the Crimean tartars who emigrated from Crimea, but also as a member of NATO.

In Crimea, there were diverse reactions to the deteriorating relations with Kiev. Separatist-oriented movements supported the actions of the authorities. On the other hand, sharp criticism was directed at the Crimean administration's policy from various sources: the Medzhlis [parliament] of the Crimean-Tatar people; the communist party of Crimea; Crimean agrarians, and; a number of other public organizations whose first priority is to solve the social and

economic problems confronting the peninsula. At the end of the month there was a split in the ranks Meshkov supporters. The Crimean Supreme Soviet dealt a serious blow to President Meshkov's reputation by refusing to confirm his proposed structure for the Crimean government as well as his recommendations to fill cabinet posts; the names he recommended came from among the group of people who work with Evgenij Saburov. As a result, the Crimean president and the government made a demonstrative exit from the Supreme Soviet's meeting hall.

According to data from Crimean sociologists at the Center for Humanities Research, the crisis has caused a drop in Meshkov's personal rating. Their survey showed produced the following numbers: only 12% of Crimeans surveyed at the end of the month fully approved of the actions of the president; another 18% basically supported him; the same percentage responded that they had never trusted Meshkov, and; 43% said that they were waiting to see what his future actions would be.

Considering the level of confrontation and the extreme positions of Meshkov and his circle, it is likely that the conflict between Simferopol and Kiev will be a protracted one. At the same time, the considered approach of the Ukrainian leadership and its refusal on principle to use force to resolve the conflict give reason to hope that the current points of disagreement will gradually be resolved through compromise and a coordination of interests.

#### **4. The Dniester Region**

In May there were no dramatic events in the Dniester region conflict zone or in Russian-Moldovan relations concerning it. The bilateral talks (on the status and time frames of the withdrawal of Russia's 14th Army) which had been scheduled for mid-month were rescheduled to a later date. There were significant changes in the make-up of the Moldovan delegation, changes which related primarily to the retirement its chief, Anatolij Tsaranu, Moldovan Republic Ambassador to Russia.

His likely replacement is Deputy Foreign Affairs Minister Nikolaj Osmotescu, an international law specialist who heads a group of Chisinau experts at talks with Tiraspol. At the last round of talks, the Moldovan delegation for the first time made concessions to the Russian side. Retreating from its original demand that the 14th Army be withdrawn by 1 Jul 94, the delegation recommended carrying out this action over a period of one to two years. In Tsaranu's opinion it is possible that Moldova, in its efforts to compromise with Moscow, will go even further and agree to granting the 14th Army the status of a military base.

Against this backdrop of growing mutual understanding between Moscow and Chisinau, relations between Moscow and Tiraspol are declining. The cause of the latest disagreement is the failure of the Russian state banknote plant to fulfill its obligation to produce and deliver banknotes to the Moldovan Dniester Republic (MDR), banknotes which had long ago been ordered and paid for by the MDR regional bank. Moreover, this obligation has been affirmed by a Russian Federation arbitration court. According to Grigorij Marakutsa, chairman of the MDR Supreme Council, holding up delivery to the MDR of its national currency was a deliberate act on the part of Russian authorities in response to pressure from Chisinau.

In this connection, on 24 May the MDR Supreme Council passed a special appeal to the President of Russia, the Federation Council, and the State Duma, requesting a positive resolution of this issue. The authors of the appeal accused Moldova of attempting to draw the Dniester region into the currency zone of the leu and at the same time "block the economics of the MDR," which, according to the authors, could have serious consequences for it. "On behalf of the people of the MDR," members of the Dniester region parliament called upon the President of the RF and the deputies of the Federal Council of Russia to "intervene in this pressuring process, since such pressure tactics are unacceptable for civilized relations." They also requested that a Russian parliamentary commission be sent to the region so that its members could "familiarize themselves with the situation which has developed."

This latest request, judging by everything else, was in pursuit of another goal--an attempt to enlist the support of the Russian parliamentarians in the confrontation between the leaders of the Dniester region and the command group of the 14th Army, a confrontation which has become more acute in recent months. In the same appeal, the authors say that the 14th Army has been waging a "slandorous mass-media campaign to discredit the leadership of the MDR." Specifically, the authors are referring to an assertion by Mikahil Bergman, a commandant of the 14th Army, that MDR President Igor Smirnov has a \$5 million personal account in an Austrian bank. In this connection, the 14th Army command group has even proposed that the Russian government strip the Dniester region leaders of their Russian citizenship. The goal of such an action would be to prevent the latter from taking trips abroad on Russian visas in order to open personal accounts in foreign banks.

President Smirnov himself, Vice-President Alexander Karaman, and other MDR leaders denied these allegations. They also declared the documented proof of embezzlement of public funds, which Berman had promised, to be completely without substance. In Karaman's opinion, the 14th Army command's constant assaults on the leaders of the Dniester region have come about because the latter are unyielding in the question of ownership of the 14th Army's property and military equipment. In accordance with a decision of the MDR Supreme Council, should the 14th Army withdraw from the region, its property would then be considered the property of the Dniester region. Naturally, the Russian military is not very happy about this.

In any case, in May in the Dniester region a law entitled "On Defending the Honor and Dignity of the MDR President" took effect. According to this law, people who publicly insult the president may be subject to a heavy fine, or they may be jailed for up to six years. Mass media organizations which distribute materials insulting the dignity and honor of the president are subject to closure. Currently the Tiraspol municipal court is hearing MDR President Igor Smirnov's 100-million-ruble law suit against Tiraspol's military commandant Mikhail Bergman and the independent television station "Asket." MDR Supreme Council Chairman Grigorij Markutsa has filed a similar suit against Bergman and the television station.

The next destabilizing event in the Dniester region, an area already long living under state-of-emergency conditions, was a 26 May assassination attempt on MDR prosecutor Boris Luchik, who was seriously wounded in the attempt. Acting MDR Minister of Security Oleg Gudyma termed the occurrence a particularly dangerous crime against the state, which will probably be classified as an act of terrorism. Among other things, the criminal aspect of the attempt is being

examined, but Tiraspol law enforcement is not excluding the possibility that the attempt may have been politically motivated, the aim being to destabilize the situation in the Dniester region. They are also working on a theory about Colonel Bergman's possible involvement in the incident. Bergman is the main crusader against corruption in the Dniester region leadership. As it happens, on 24 May, literally on the eve of the assassination attempt, Luchik had initiated a criminal action against Bergman because of anti-government activity.

Expressing his indignation over the assassination attempt, Bergman himself pointed out that "there are problems" in the relations between the MVD, the Public Prosecutor's office and the MDR Committee for Republic Security (CRS). He was probably referring to a recent conflict between the MDR Prosecutor and the chairman of the CRS, Vadim Shevtsovyj. The latter illegally released from jail Victor Petrenko, director of Tiraspol's vehicle service agency, who had been arrested on 13 May. Of course, the head of state security, Oleg Gudyma, has called the CRS' chief supposed involvement in the attempt "absolutely absurd."

In a word, the ongoing conflict between the command of the 14th Army and the leadership of the Dniester region remains one of the most fundamental aspects of the current political situation of the region.

## **5. Northern and Eastern Kazakhstan**

The arrest of one of the leaders of the Russian community in Northern Kazakhstan, Russian citizen Boris Suprunjuk, continued to have an extremely negative effect on the political situation in Kazakhstan. Almost all of Russia's nationalist/patriotic and communist organizations have come to Suprunjuk's defense. The Congressional Leader of Russian Communities, Dmitrij Rogozin, and the Ataman of the Union of Cossacks, Alexander Martynov, have even issued an ultimatum to Kazakhstan authorities in which they threaten to take action to free Suprunjuk using their own forces. The Suprunjuk affair has been so widely publicized that even the deputy secretary of the RF Security Ministry, Valerij Manilov, is calling for the presidents of Russia and Kazakhstan to discuss the situation of the Cossacks and the Russian-speaking population in Kazakhstan.

At the end of May, Suprunjuk was released and expelled to Russia. This was after a psychiatric evaluation and after yielding to the demands of the Russian authorities (including those of Serge Stepashin, director of the RF Federal Counterintelligence, who was in Alma-Ata for visit). Throughout the entire time that Suprunjuk was in Alma-Ata, activists of the Russian community, the Social Democratic Party of Kazakhstan and the Semirechensk [Seven-River] Cossacks picketed the building of the Kazakh Republic Prosecutor's office.

At a press conference in Moscow on 30 May, after his release, Boris Suprunjuk declared his determination to continue his political activity in Kazakhstan and, as his first action, sent an official invitation from the Russian community to Alexander Solzhenitsyn to visit Northern Kazakhstan during his tour of the country. There are three extremely important reasons for Solzhenitsyn to visit Northern Kazakhstan. The Trans-Sib[erian railway] on which he will be travelling, passes through Petropavlovsk with its transit prison and with the city of Ekibastuz in the Pavlodarsky region. The Gulag period of Solzhenitsyn's life is connected with these two

places. Moreover, Solzhenitsyn originated the idea of joining Northern Kazakhstan to Russia, as described in his article called "How Shall We Equip Russia?"

Russian nationalist activists are not the only ones preparing for the possible visit of Solzhenitsyn to Kazakhstan. Also making preparations [of a different sort] are activists of the Kazakh movement "Azat," of the Republican Party and of the Kazakh Language Society, all of whom plan mass protest actions and may even attempt to prevent the Russian writer from setting foot on Kazakh territory.

Naturally Suprunjuk's release has not solved the problem of the situation of Russians in Kazakhstan. Specifically, there is news about the start of a trial in Pavlodar against the Cossacks who resisted the removal of a monument to Ermak. At the Russian-Kazakh talks, the latest round of which took place at the end of the month in Alma-Ata, the Russian delegation continued to insist on a dual-citizenship formula, which is unacceptable to Kazakhstan.

## **6. Southern Ossetia**

In the Southern Ossetian conflict zone, despite the ongoing relative tension in relations between the Georgian and Ossetian populations, life is nevertheless gradually becoming peaceful. On 12 May in Vladikavkaz (Northern Ossetia) there was a meeting between Georgian and Southern Ossetian delegations. The meeting was initiated by a CSCE mission and was devoted to the problem of the return of refugees to Southern Ossetia. According to a report from NEGA, the sides concluded that the return of refugees is being complicated by the absence of a political settlement of the conflict, and they agreed to create an expert group which would make preparations for four-way negotiations on Southern Ossetia's status. The participants would be Georgia, Southern and Northern Ossetia, and Russia. The decision was made to prepare a protocol of intent for the meeting, and the provisions of the 24 Jun 92 Dagomys agreement on Southern Ossetia would be accepted as the basis for the protocol's contents.

Currently in political circles in Moscow, Tbilisi and Tskhinvali there are unofficial discussions of different options for a long-term solution to the problem of Southern Ossetia's status. The range of solutions under consideration is fairly broad, from granting Southern Ossetia (in accordance with terminology officially accepted by Tbilisi--the "Tskhinvali Region") the rights of an autonomous region or republic (the option most acceptable to Tbilisi), to creating a confederation made up of Southern Ossetia, Abkhazia, Adzhariya and "the remainder" of Georgia (the option toward which Tskhinvali and Sukhumi are leaning). Between these two extremes there is an "interim" plan, i.e., form a federated state inside the internationally recognized borders of Georgia, with the above mentioned regions becoming its subjects, including Southern Ossetia.

Another version is also possible, i.e., Southern Ossetia would become part of Georgia based on a special treaty on delineating powers and authorities (similar to the Russian-Tartar or Ukrainian-Crimean agreements). As an option acceptable for this transitional period there is also a proposal to transfer Southern Ossetia to the jurisdiction of a combined administration made up of representatives from Tbilisi, Moscow and Tskhinvali.

## ENDNOTES

1. From Zviad Gamsakhurdia who once headed this group. [--Trans.] [BACK](#)