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EDITORIAL PRINCIPLES

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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.

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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.

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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.

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MOSCOW'S NORTH CAUCASUS POLICY BACKFIRES

Emil Pain

Vladimir Putin's main reform, the administrative reform, was justified by the same goals as the war in Chechnya: to preserve the integrity of the country and to suppress terrorism. The war was the impetus of the reform plan and provided legitimacy for it. The war also determined a top-down imposition of state power onto the regions of the North Caucasus and towards the suppression of national elites instead of seeking agreement with them. However, as the rapidly deteriorating situation in the North Caucasus shows, Moscow's policies have produced exactly the opposite of their intentions.

BACKGROUND: The most important element of Putin's administrative reforms is replacing the election of governors with their appointment. Many analysts appraised this measure positively, especially in the North Caucasus where the level of administrative corruption, including elected officials, is the highest in Russia. However, the results of the reforms prove the contrary. Whereas it matters little to people in Central Russia whether regional leaders are elected or appointed, for the indigenous nations of the North Caucasus elections are a customary institution and an integral part of ordinary life. Real and effective power has, now as in Czarist times, been exercised by informal leaders who were elected in communities of various character and nature. The greater the gap between formal and informal power, the greater the probability of governance collapse. The Kremlin put aside refractory, stubborn but popular leaders, such as Ruslan Aushev in Ingushetia, and banked on obedient but unpopular figures. The net result of this policy is the increasing alienation of the local people from all authorities, be they local or central.

Ingushetia is the most vivid example of this development. Security forces general Murat Zyazikov was practically appointed president, as the Kremlin disqualified all real competitors for the election. His appointment was intended to prevent the proliferation of Chechen terrorism in Ingushetia. As a result, preventive 'mopping-up' operations against suspicious persons were launched, and in six months from January to June 2004, more than 100 young men disappeared without a trace in the tiny republic, and were apparently either taken to so-called filtration

camps or simply killed by Russian soldiers. This occurs against the background of an economic meltdown in Ingushetia. Since Zyazikov's appointment, Ingushetia has been plagued by increasing unrest, and ethnic Ingush are increasingly involved in armed resistance to Russian authorities. On June 21-22, 2004, in the commemoration day of deportation of Chechens and Ingush people in 1944, virtually all of Ingushetia was seized by gunmen for several hours.

The situation in Dagestan is not much better. The republic's leadership has lost popular support and seems to rely only on Moscow. Dagestan may now compete with Chechnya in numbers of terrorist and sabotage acts, about 70-90 of which occur annually. The most visible forms of resistance to local and Federal authorities are in the form of non-traditional Islam, branded as 'Wahhabis' by authorities. Dagestani 'Wahhabis' declared a holy war (jihad) against Russia as early as in 1999. All in all, approximately ten different Jamaats are involved in the Dagestani jihad network. About 500 fighters have for several years waged a sabotage and terrorist campaign against law enforcement bodies in Dagestan. While it is unlikely that Chechen and Dagestani gunmen coordinate their activities permanently, they are clearly employing the same slogans of Islamic fundamentalism and fighting a common, Russian enemy.

Karachay-Cherkessia's situation is similarly deteriorating. In autumn 2004, an enraged Karachay crowd briefly captured Kremlin henchman and President Mustafa Batdyev's residence and demanded his immediate resignation. The Islamic radical movement is exceptionally strong in the republic.

Official statistics provided by the Ministry of Interior show that 219 'Wahhabis' have been placed under permanent surveillance although no formal charges can be brought against them. Informed experts assess the real number of radical Islamists to ca. 1,500-2,000, increasing unabatedly due to an influx of young people who prefer to join armed groups of new jamaats in the absence of other social prospects.

Kabardino-Balkaria, finally, has been one of the most stable republics of the region. But presently, news from the republic resembles summaries from war reporting. Special military operations are carried out in its capital, Nalchik, on a regular basis. In the course of such operations, tanks are employed to evict groups of armed Wahhabis from multi-storey apartment buildings. Official statistics of Kabardino-Balkaria's Ministry of Interior estimate about 400 'Wahhabis' and their aides in the republic.

IMPLICATIONS: Attempts to impose unified regional laws is a component of Putin's administrative reform. Pursuant to the Federal law "On general principles of local self-government organization in the Russian Federation" all basic, grassroots local self-government bodies are to define their boundaries promptly. Attempts to implement the law in the North Caucasus immediately brought about numerous ethnic conflicts. Disputes around the creation of an Abazin municipal entity in Kubina aul and a Nogai municipal entity in Adyghe-Khable flared up. The Balkars decisively protest against the regional law on municipal boundaries in Kabardino-Balkaria. Old conflicts manifest themselves even in Adygea which until recently used to be the most quiet republic of the region. In this case, the principal irritant has become another idea launched within the framework of administrative reform: the enlargement of regions by way of merging Russian territories with national republics. The Russian population of Adygea, comprising nearly 70% of the total population, supports unification with the Krasnodar region while Adygeans are categorically against this transformation. The protests of the Adygeans are increasingly receiving the support of radical Islamic organizations of the Wahhabi vein.

According to some data, up to 300 Wahhabi supporters exist in Adygea, and the number of adherents of the

doctrine is increasing as state power and the traditional clergy's authority is declining.

In all times and in all countries, increased loyalty on the part of ethnic elites can and has been achieved through the expansion of these elites' participation in state affairs. In the 1990s, the Russian government pursued this policy and in fact succeeded. The political activity of ethnic elites declined in most regions, with the important exception of war-torn Chechnya. Today, a revival of political activity among ethnic elites is taking place alongside a rising tide of popular dissatisfaction with the authoritarian policies of the Kremlin. An ethnic elite estranged from the power is able to use such popular discontent and to invest in ethnic-religious terms. By doing so, the ethnic elite could achieve an intensity of popular resistance that no army can overcome. Speaking of Russian realities, it must be noted that the Russian army has lost the function of containing separatist tendencies long ago. The people fear the military when it is in the barracks, but the military's record of waging war for a good ten years and doing so unsuccessfully undermines its ability to deter anyone.

CONCLUSIONS: The political situation in the North Caucasus republics are characterized by a number of features. The first is that regional and, more recently, federal powers are experiencing an unprecedented crisis of trust among the local people. Second, against this background, parallel structures of power in the form of Islamic jamaats are rapidly developing. These parallel structures are not necessarily prone to terrorist methods or radical fundamentalism, but they create a social space within which Russian legal norms are virtually ineffective. Third, the inability of the state to enforce its own laws implies a loss of control over territory, even if few in the region speak of outright secession.

The emergence of three fronts (Chechen, Ingush and Dagestani) of armed resistance to the Federal powers as well as occasional armed attacks of Islamic radicals against Federal authorities in other republics of the North Caucasus create an entirely new situation, widely different from only 2-3 years ago, when Chechnya was the only focal point of the armed resistance to the Federal power.

AUTHOR'S BIO: Dr. Emil Pain is Director of the Center of Ethnopolitical Studies in Moscow.

THE ANDIJAN DISTURBANCES AND THEIR IMPLICATIONS

John C.K. Daly

The events of May 12-13 in Andijan have exposed deep fissures between Washington's rhetoric and policy in the war against terror in Central Asia, plunging relations between Tashkent and Washington to their lowest level since 9/11. At issue is the very definition of terrorism – the Karimov government maintains that events in Andijan were planned by Hizb ut-Tahrir extremists, a group that Tashkent has been urging Washington for years to add to its list of terrorist organizations. Unless the volume and tone of the rhetoric can be dampened, it seems likely that reaction to the events in the Ferghana valley will have a lasting and negative impact on U.S.-Uzbek relations.

BACKGROUND: The sparse information percolating out of eastern Uzbekistan leaves little doubt that the encounter between Uzbek security forces and demonstrators in Andijan on May 13 led to a massive loss of life. The number of casualties is in dispute; Tashkent maintains that 173 Uzbeks were killed in the clashes while human rights and Muslim activists place the numbers far higher; one Hizb ut-Tahrir offshoot, 1924.org, claims the wildly inflated figure of 20,000 dead. Nearly everything about the encounters, which began shortly after midnight on 12 May is in dispute, but the catalyst for the clash was the trial of 23 men, which began on February 10. The 23 defendants were members of the Akramiya movement, an offshoot of Hizb ut-Tahrir. The 23 men, arrested on 23 June 2004, were charged for organizing a criminal organization, undermining the constitutional basis of the republic of Uzbekistan, preparing or distributing documents that contain a threat to public safety, and setting up, leading, and participating in extremist religious organizations. The uprising in Andijan was sparked by an effort to free the men from a local penal facility where they were being held. Shortly before midnight on May 12, armed men attacked a traffic police post, killing four on duty officers and seizing submachine guns, grenades and

pistols from the post's weapons depot. The assailants then moved on and attacked a military base, shot five servicemen and acquired more weaponry. Duly armed, the insurgents in a fifteen-vehicle convoy then moved on the Andijan prison, where between 600 and 2,000 inmates were held. Attacking the facility, the gunmen distributed weapons and liberated nearly a third of the inmates, including the 23 defendants. The militants then moved to downtown Andijan, attacking the buildings of the National Security Council and the regional administration and police department. Repulsed at the two law enforcement sites, the gunmen commandeered the administrative building and took about 20 hostages, and before dawn began calling their relatives to bring women and children to the site to form human shields around the building. The stage was set for an inevitable showdown. Top officials from Tashkent flew to Andijan and attempted to negotiate a peaceful end to the crisis.

Uzbek Interior Minister Zakir Almatov stated that during negotiations the protesters refused to dilute their demands, one of which was the release of Akram Yuldashev, noting, "The guerrillas, hiding behind women and children and captured hostages, are not willing to make a compromise to solve the

conflict. The representatives of civil society, relatives and interested parts also joined the negotiations." By late afternoon, the square outside the administrative building was filling with hundreds of onlookers. The gunmen eventually emerged from the building behind bound hostages in front followed by women and children. Around 5:30 p.m. firing began; it remains unclear who fired the first shot. Thousands of Andijan residents then fled towards the border with Kyrgyzstan, about 25 miles away.

IMPLICATIONS: As the refugees in Kyrgyzstan told their stories, Tashkent found itself in the middle of its worst public relations crisis since independence. Uzbek officials maintained that both Uzbek and foreign militants had carefully planned events in Andijan to provoke a harsh government response that would radicalize the population to confront and possibly overthrow the government. Western governments and human rights organizations deplored the loss of life amid rising calls for an international investigation, which Tashkent rejected on the grounds that an investigation of an internal terrorist incident would compromise national sovereignty. In the absence of substantial hard information Tashkent found itself on the defensive against unsubstantiated claims. Activists charged that more violence occurred in Pakhtabad with hundreds supposedly killed, but have provided no evidence. The Uzbek government maintains that no such incident occurred.

The Uzbek government gradually continued to press its interpretation of what happened in Andijan, insisting that it was an armed militant uprising. Four days after the clash, Uzbek Prosecutor-General Rashid Qodirov gave a fuller account of the events, noting, "During the attack [on the police station], the criminals murdered four personnel of the patrol post, [and] four more were seriously wounded. They took 264 firearms, 40 grenades, and more than 8,000 bullets. After that, the same armed band raided the nearby military base and seized a huge amount of weaponry, including 53 machine guns, four rifles, and more than 2,000 bullets, as well as a ZIL-130 truck."

Tashkent's version of events received support from a number of sources. On May 16, Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov spoke of the Andijan unrest as a "Taliban-like provocation,". Eight days later Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman Kong Quan expressed firm support for Tashkent's crackdown on the three forces of separatism, terrorism, and extremism. Tashkent also received support from a major Islamic theologian, Chief Imam of Egypt and Sheikh of al-Azhar Muhammad Tantawi.

Tashkent also received support from western academics. Professor Shirin Akiner of the University of London's School of Oriental and African Studies traveled to Andijan, where over two days she interviewed nearly 40 people, from madrasa students to hospital workers, morgue employees and graveyard wardens. Her conclusions, first aired in the Uzbek media, were that the government's official statistic of 173 dead was largely accurate. On June 7, Akiner subsequently released an expanded report on her investigation, credibly detailing the same conclusions.

CONCLUSIONS: Although western media coverage has proven to be far below standard, the Andijan violence has already torn a rift in U.S.-Uzbek relations that threatens continued cooperation in the war on terror. Washington hardly speaks with a single voice on the issue, as the State Department's concern with human rights clashes with the Pentagon's more pragmatic desire to retain access to its Karsi-Khanabad air base in southern Uzbekistan. The downing of a Chinook helicopter with 17 crew on June 28 in Afghanistan's Konar province near Asadabad will reinforce Pentagon arguments that a continued presence in Uzbekistan is essential. But the media obfuscation continues on this, as U.S. sources reported that Tashkent had restricted U.S. operations at Khanabad, ostensibly because of dissatisfaction over coverage of Andijan. According to a highly placed source in Tashkent, the reality was far more pragmatic and fiscal; as promised U.S. aid to upgrade Kahanabad's runway and facilities had not been forthcoming, the base had deteriorated to the

point where Uzbek authorities imposed night flight restrictions because of safety concerns.

Whatever happens now, it will happen in the media “global village.” If Washington continues to pursue its bifurcated foreign policy, it would seem that the ultimate winners will be Moscow and Beijing, as they have supported Tashkent’s perceptions and actions. In the 21st century “Great Game,” Washington faces a tough choice between its

rhetoric and reality. As the proverb puts it, “the dog barks and the caravan moves on.” If Washington is committed to a presence in Central Asia to quash terrorism, it could well do with quieting some of the barking.

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SALAFI-JIHADISTS GEOPOLITICAL PERSPECTIVE OF CENTRAL ASIA

Murad Batal Al-Shishani

Geopolitics has revived as a chief theoretical perspective to understanding international relations. Both vintage approaches such as Mackinder’s Heartland theory, and newer ones including Zbigniew Brzezinski’s “Grand Chessboard” discuss the importance of the Central Eurasian region in shaping international interests and policies. It is equally interesting to examine the significance attributed to Central Eurasia in the Salafi-Jihadist movement, with Al-Qaeda as its main feature (without confusing the movement with the organization), especially since the region has become one of the world’s most important areas since the collapse of the Soviet Union.

BACKGROUND: This article builds on two major works by two thinkers in the Salafi-Jihadist movement. The first is “Fursan Tahta Rayat An-Nabi” (Knights under the Prophet’s Banner), by Ayman Zawahiri, was published as a series in the London-based Arabic newspaper “Al-Sharq Al-Awsat” in December 2001. The second is “Al-Muslimoun fi Wasat Asia wa Ma’rakat Al-Islam Al-mukbila” (Muslims in Central Asia and Islam’s Next Battle), by Abu-Mus’ab al-Sori “the Syrian” in November 1999 and published on many Islamist free websites.

Zawahiri is a well-known figure, and Abu Mus’ab al-Sori is a Salafi-Jihadist ideologue who conducts research to “review the Jihadist experience and explore the methods and patterns of Jihadist movements” and was not involved in the

movements’ activities until the American Department of State issued a warrant for his arrest in 2004 with a US\$5 million reward, which “the Syrian” described as ridiculous. Zawahiri and al-Sori both agree that there is a global movement, exemplified by the “Crusader-Zionist alliance”, against Islam and its proponents, namely the Jihadists. Therefore, they believe in the necessity of finding a safe haven for their movement, as other Salafi-Jihadist movements seem to believe, to be a base for their constant and expanding battle against the United States, Israel and other enemies of the Muslim World.

Central Eurasia, according to those two leaders, is the base from where Jihad will move towards the Heart of the Muslim World, that is the Middle East, which Zawahiri claims “represents the true

battlefield, the stage for the major operations and the base for Islam". Al-Sori is of the same mind; arguing that "in the present stage, it is necessary for cadres of Islamic work in general to join forces with Jihadist movements in the region [Central Asia] to carry their Jihad there and then move on to the Middle East."

In that context, Eurasia is of temporary significance until the battle is moved to the Heart of the Muslim World. This can be achieved by forming a "Jihadist Islamic belt", as Zawahiri calls it, that can be created by recourse to the Chechnya and Afghanistan experiences by hand and by mouth, but without implicating them by force or pressure given the many conditions surrounding these two areas.

IMPLICATIONS: Zawahiri believes that Chechnya and Afghanistan (with a liberation Jihadist movement in each one) is a threat to American interests because of the tremendous amounts of oil in the area and the presence of American forces in Central Asia. He also believes that the success of the Chechen experience in "liberating the Caucasus" will "form a Jihadist center that will harbor thousands of Mujahideen from all over the Muslim World in a way that facilitates their passage to the Caspian Sea, which is rich in oil, leaving between them and Afghanistan only the neutral Republic of Turkmenistan, thereby creating the Jihadist Muslim belt in the South of Russia and reaching Pakistan, with its young Mujahideen in Kashmir, in the east and Iran and Turkey, who are sympathizers with Muslims in Central Asia, in the south and west. Zawahiri sees in that the destruction of Russia, which he dubs a United States ally, in the face of a "Jihadist awakening", which he believes is the reason the United States is not interfering to stop Russian crimes in Chechnya.

Al-Sori's perspective is not very different from Zawahiri's, except that he believes there are buds of a Jihadist movement in Uzbekistan. He feels that Jihadists' taking control of or creating a safe haven in the area from Bangladesh to North India, Kashmir, Pakistan, Afghanistan, Central Asia with the Muslims of Turkmenistan, to the Caucasus and

Urals, which is geographically spacious and has a significant Muslim presence, lends leverage to the activities of the "Jihadist movement."

In addition to that, al-Sori adds a number of religious and theological justifications for the area's importance, such as citing indications in the Prophet's sayings that point to Islam's coming victory in the area. These are in addition to political and strategic reasons, such as the region being a point of strength for Muslims and a point of weakness for the "Crusader-Zionist alliance". Al-Sori also sees additional advantages in the population density and geography because the area will be an "invincible fortress for Jihadist movements." The same goes for economic resources that will provide the "Jihadist movement with financial support."

Diffusion of the Salafi-Jihadist stream in the region is distributed across different historic eras, especially Tajikistan, Chechnya, and the Ferghana Valley straddling Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, and Kyrgyzstan. It thus shoots out in a parallel line with other regions where the stream has been active, including Afghanistan, Pakistan, the Middle East, and Turkey. The stream seeks to establish a safe haven in the region so as to establish a base from which it would launch "Jihad", safeguarding its continuity, either in facing the United States, its interests in the Middle East, or the ruling regimes there. This would form a platform to establish some type of a southern front, utilizing the natural resources of the Caspian region and the region's marine outlets at the Caspian Sea (which Afghanistan lacked) in addition to benefiting from the state of anxiety faced by Eurasian communities stemming from the economic and social transition processes. The presence of oil pipelines in the region is yet another factor whereby they are envisaged as keys to control of the flow of oil, and may pose a genuine threat to many countries in case the Salafi-Jihadist forces flourish in the region.

CONCLUSIONS: The Salafi-Jihadist movement aims at finding safe havens to be the base for its "Jihadist" activities. The existence of such a haven illustrates the salvationist nature of the movement

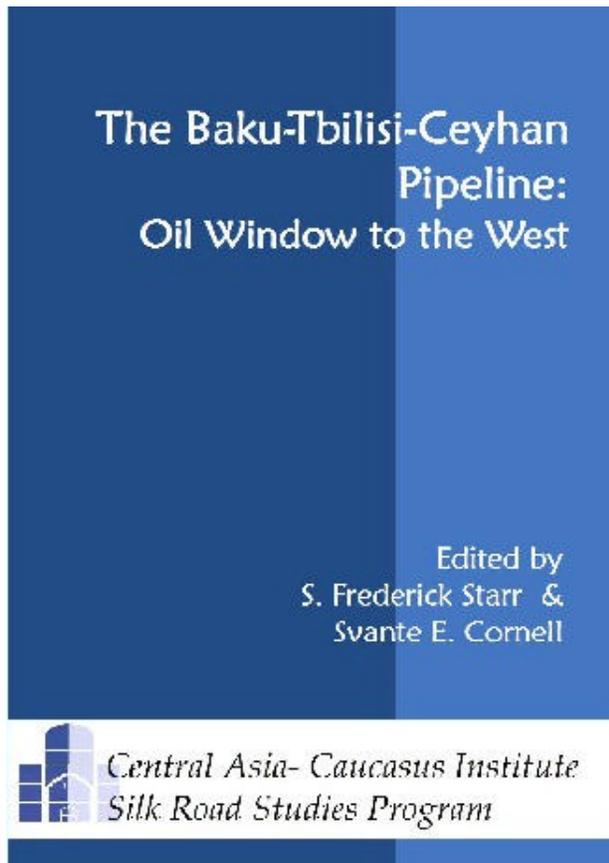
that moves between the “far enemy” and the “close enemy.” Moreover, the Salafi-Jihadist movement strives to create safe havens in areas that possess a strategic resource, like oil (Iraq, Saudi Arabia and Central Asia) in order to form a geopolitical front that challenges America’s presence, allies, and interests.

The war in Iraq has paved the way for a new front for the Salafi-Jihadist stream, indicating a retreat in the priority accorded to the Caucasian and Central Asian region. However, the region remains vulnerable to renewed activities, particularly as it faces structural problems that the Salafi-Jihadists regard as fundamental in gaining acceptance for their views and trends. These include a high level of oppression and domineering regimes, high

corruption and unemployment, and Russian attempts at hegemony.

Therefore, any changes in the Iraqi situation would keep Central Eurasia a good candidate for an increasing presence of the Salafi-Jihadist forces there. Of course, the causes and interests of the peoples of those areas remain different from the agenda of the Salafi-Jihadist movement; Chechnya is probably the best example of that.

AUTHOR’S BIO: Murad Batal Al-Shishani is a Jordanian-Chechen writer who holds an M.A degree in Political Science, specializing in Islamic Movements in Chechnya. He is the author of the book "Islamic Movement in Chechnya and the Chechen-Russian Conflict 1990-2000", Amman 2001 (in Arabic).



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CENTRAL ASIA'S CHALLENGING MARCH TOWARD DEMOCRACY

Richard Weitz

The recent unrest in Uzbekistan does not necessarily mean that the democratic wave that has swept through Georgia, Ukraine, and Kyrgyzstan will soon liberate that country. The triumph of democracy in Uzbekistan, as elsewhere, will require propitious local conditions. Unfortunately, the circumstances there are not entirely favorable. Even if a democratic political system arose, moreover, the United States and other Western countries would still face unpleasant policy challenges. The West needs to develop strategies both to try to shape these developments in favorable ways and hedge against adverse outcomes.

BACKGROUND: Uzbekistan shares some characteristics that contributed to the collapse of the incumbent regimes in Georgia, Ukraine, and most recently Kyrgyzstan. In particular, the current Uzbek government is similarly politically repressive, economically ineffective, and plagued by corruption. The lack of effective mechanisms for peaceful political change, or even accepted methods for leadership succession, has led some of the regime's opponents to seek to depose it by force.

But conditions in Uzbekistan today differ in two important respects from the pre-revolutionary situations in the other states. First, Uzbekistan lacks a credible opposition movement or leader. Whereas the other former Soviet republics allowed independent civil society, including foreign non-governmental organizations (NGOs), some room to maneuver, Uzbek President Islam Karimov has suppressed all his important domestic opposition for years, including sweeping measures against so-called "independent Muslims" engaging in religious rituals outside of registered mosques. This repression has only intensified following the revolutionary upheavals elsewhere and the mass unrest in Andijan. No charismatic leader like Mikheil Saakashvili or Viktor Yushchenko nevertheless emerged to rally and direct popular hostility against the regime into a cohesive force for political change.

Second, a major factor contributing to the development of revolutionary situations in Georgia, Ukraine, and Kyrgyzstan was the inability or unwillingness of the local security forces to employ the high level of force needed to derail the burgeoning popular protests. In contrast, Uzbek security forces have shown a willingness to respond harshly against regime opponents. They also have been effective at countering the guerrilla attacks and urban bombings perpetrated by the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (IMU) and other Central Asian terrorist groups. Truly massive protests might eventually overwhelm them, but the Andijan violence has probably served only to reinforce their determination to remain in power and thereby thwart threats of retribution or retaliation.

The challenges that the current Uzbek government's collapse would present for Western policy should not be underestimated. For one thing, it is uncertain whether the successor regime would be any better. Although Muslim practices in Central Asia have traditionally been moderate, Islamic extremists, like the Bolsheviks during the Russian Revolution, could exploit the chaotic dynamics of a revolutionary situation to overwhelm their more popular but less well-organized democratic opponents.

Another scenario for regime change would involve a "Ceaurescu-style" solution. As in Romania at the end of the Cold War, Karimov's colleagues could

sacrifice him and seize power themselves in a coup. In this case, the same ruling elite would remain, but with a different leader or dominant faction. It is unclear whether the putsch leaders would be inclined to initiate major political reforms given that the regime's past atrocities would have compromised them as well. To begin to answer such questions, much better intelligence about Karimov's possible successors is needed.

The break-up of Karimov's regime could easily see the break-up of his country. Neighboring Tajikistan offers a clear example of the problems such a development could present. There, the collapse of the Soviet system led to regional fragmentation and a five-year civil war from 1992-97 among coalitions organized by geography and ideology. Approximately 50,000-100,000 people died during the ensuing chaos.

Even the advent of a genuinely democratic government in Uzbekistan would present serious problems if it proved too weak and ineffectual to ensure the domestic stability required for economic prosperity and internal security. The collapse of the old regime in Kyrgyzstan entailed an estimated \$100 million damage from looting in Bishkek alone.

As in Iraq, foreign investors typically shun countries that cannot provide clear signs of stability. In both Tajikistan and Afghanistan, moreover, Islamic terrorists associated with al-Qaeda, the IMU, and other extremist groups exploited unstable internal conditions to establish extensive network of training camps and related facilities. All the Central Asian governments as well as Afghanistan have proved unable to secure their borders sufficiently to counter the continuing surge in large-scale narcotics cultivation and trafficking.

IMPLICATIONS: The United States and other Western countries lack a strategy for promoting the right kinds of political change in Central Asia—one that transitions regimes from autocracy to democracy, not to theocracy. This problem is not new. During the Cold War, U.S. officials faced the dilemma of promoting reform but not communist revolutions in South Vietnam and Central America.

The experience with Iran in 1978-79 is perhaps even more relevant, as detailed by Michael Fredholm's article in the June 1 issue of the *Analyst*. These cases highlight the difficulty of seeking to transform a foreign country into a viable democracy when the underlying cultural and other prerequisites are weak.

Unfortunately, it is not self-evident what tactics would best lead to a smooth transition. An interventionist approach would conform to the Bush administration's statements about the need to promote democracy rather than continue to support authoritarian regimes. Although these remarks were aimed primarily at Middle Eastern governments, especially Egypt and Saudi Arabia, they clearly apply to U.S. ties with the Central Asian states as well. Indeed, Western pressure on Karimov and other Central Asian leaders has led them to commit on many occasions to reform.

It is unclear, however, that the United States and its allies possess the leverage to compel the established regimes of Central Asia to transform. Their leaders believe that foreign governments have little choice except to support them given the risks of anti-American extremists coming to power in their wake. They also think they can turn to Moscow and Beijing if Western governments curtail financial aid or otherwise become too preachy. Recognizing these limitations, both the U.S. and the EU governments resist reducing their aid programs to Uzbekistan, because they at least indirectly support socioeconomic reforms.

A strategy of disengagement, on the other hand, could repeat the mistake the United States made after the end of the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan, when America's subsequent lack of interest about the country fatally contributed to the establishment of terrorist sanctuaries there. Even Uzbek democrats critical of foreign ties with Karimov recognize that a complete Western withdrawal would not necessarily help their cause.

Foreign governments will need to work closely together to best manage democratization. They could have much more influence if they acted in

concert and thereby deprived Central Asian leaders of opportunities to play them off against each other. On the other hand, officials in China, Iran, and Russia could interpret a wave of democratization in Central Asia as aimed primarily at enhancing U.S. power. This perception would heighten concerns about U.S. encirclement, the repercussions of nearby chaos for their own territory, and fears of contagion.

CONCLUSIONS: Besides a long-term program aimed at advancing the right kind of regime change, international actors will need a hedging strategy in case of sudden regime collapse. The Central Asian political systems are so tightly controlled by personalities and informal networks that sweeping policy transformations could easily ensue from a

turnover at the top. Any change in leadership would likely see a change in regime. Foreign governments will need to develop plans in advance of such a case to protect expatriates, manage refugees, discourage foreign intervention, conduct covert operations against Islamic extremists potentially trying to seize power, and prevent the emergence of another dictator—in particular, by pressuring new leaders from the start to introduce political and economic reforms before they have become so entrenched that they no longer feel vulnerable or the need for foreign endorsement.

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NEW
The June 15 issue of the **Central Asia-Caucasus Analyst** is online.

Book Published S. Frederick Starr and Svante E. Cornell, Eds, *The Daku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan Pipeline: A Window to the West*, Washington and Uppsala: CACI & SRSP, May 2005.

The **Country Fact Sheets**, *Eurasian Narcotics*, has been launched with 18 entries.

OVERVIEW
The Central Asia-Caucasus Institute and the Silk Road Studies Program constitute a single, joint Transatlantic Research and Policy Center. The Center is independent and privately funded, and has offices in Washington, D.C., and Uppsala, Sweden. The Center is affiliated with the Paul H. Nitze School of Advanced International Studies of Johns Hopkins University, and with the Departments of East European Studies and Peace and Conflict Research at Uppsala University. It is the first institution of its kind in both Europe and North America, and is firmly established as a leading focus of research and policy worldwide, serving a large and diverse community of analysts, scholars, policy-watchers, business leaders, journalists, and students.

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RECENT PUBLICATIONS
FIELD REPORT Emin Poljanec, "Stockholm Conference on New Security Threats in Eurasia", *Central Asia-Caucasus Analyst*, 15 June 2005.

EVENTS
1-2 June
Conference on Countering Narcotics and Organized Crime in the Baltic Sea Region, Stockholm.

May 24
W. P. Carey Forum on "The U.S.-Afghan Partnership", with H.E. President Hamid Karzai, President of Afghanistan. Listen to President Karzai's Speech

May 19-20
Conference on New Security Threats in Eurasia: Implications for the Euro-Atlantic Space, Stockholm.

May 11
W. P. Carey Forum on "The Rise of the Turkic World", with Hugh Pope, Istanbul Bureau Chief, Wall Street Journal

May 8-July 2
Guest Researcher Dr. Mamuka Tsereteli of American University is joining the Center to work on cooperation between Europe and Central Eurasia in economic security.

May 4
W. P. Carey Forum on "Kyrgyzstan's Path Toward Democracy", with Ambassador Stephen Young, U.S. Ambassador to Kyrgyzstan

The New website of the Central Asia-Caucasus Institute and Silk Road Studies Program has been launched! Containing innumerable links to publications, data, etc., it is available at <http://www.silkroadstudies.org>. Mirror site will soon be uploaded at <http://www.sais-jhu.edu/caci>

FIELD REPORTS

WILL KAZAKHSTAN'S GOVERNMENT RESIGN?

Marat Yermukanov

Since the beginning of the year the cabinet of ministers of Kazakhstan has come under the fire of severe criticism for its poor performance not only from the opposition but also from the high-placed presidential entourage. There are many symptoms to suggest that the resignation of Danial Akhmetov's government is only a matter of months.

In his recent interview to the Liter newspaper, presidential aide Yermukhambet Yertysbayev, known for his proclivity to make unusual political forecasts, predicted that president would dismiss the government in late August, if it fails to curb inflation and effectively manage the economy to ensure the implementation of the program of social development outlined in this year's presidential address to the nation.

The cabinet of ministers has become the target of criticism on many occasions before. In September last year, President Nursultan Nazarbayev rapped the government for the slow pace of administrative reforms and inflating the clumsy administrative machine up to 16 ministries and a dozen of independent and irresponsible governing bodies unaccountable to any of ministries.

On June 13, after hearing the report of the Ministry of Finance, some deputies demanded the immediate resignation of the government. The popularity of the government plummeted after the auditing committee of parliament reported serious financial irregularities involving 31.3 billion tenge diverted from social infrastructure programs last year. Further investigations carried out by the Prosecutor

General's Office and the Agency for fighting economic crimes revealed the mismanagement of funds channeled to housing and road construction. In 2004, twelve government officials were sacked for financial improprieties. This year deputy ministers from the Transport and Communications Ministry as well as Ministry of Finance stepped down amid a surge of similar scandals.

All these accusations and sackings may create an impression that the state is bent on rooting out big-scale corruption in top-placed echelons of power and pave the way for a transparent economy. But a more plausible explanation for the sudden eruption of a new anti-corruption crusade seems to be the upcoming presidential elections. Affordable housing, salary and pension raises starting from July, the development of a wide network of social infrastructure were all promised by President Nazarbayev in his address to the nation in February. But the government's inability to cope with the task before the elections is becoming evident. Prime Minister Danial Akhmetov took desperate efforts to keep down soaring prices for agricultural produce, but so far to no avail. In three months, vegetable prices hiked by 5.2% and meat prices rose by 0.2%.

On June 22, Prime Minister Akhmetov convened cabinet members for an urgent sitting to discuss the implementation of housing program, one of the most important items on President Nazarbayev's election campaign agenda. The state program envisages the construction of relatively affordable housing for population at the reduced price of \$350 per square meter. Although 42 billion tenge were

allocated from the state budget for this purpose, as of June 1, only 14.3 billion tenge had actually been used. Danial Akhmetov, using very harsh language, publicly shifted the blame for the failure of housing program on the Ministry of Industry and Trade, and added that regional governors (akims) were “extremely ineffective” in their efforts to reach the set target.

Mr. Akhmetov is in an unenviable position. An ardent advocate of integration within the Single Economic Space and an influential figure in Russian business circles in the energy sector, he took the post of prime minister at the height of intensifying Russian-Kazakh economic ties. Over the last few years, his name was frequently mentioned in the press in connection with shady businesses with Russian electricity and coal companies. Although none of these insinuations led to proper investigations, the prime minister’s legitimacy in the public eye took a beating.

It is only logical for the president to get rid of everything that may in any way be damaging for his pre-election policy. He clearly needs someone with stronger political charisma to replace the weary Akhmetov. The avalanche of criticism heaped on the prime minister for his unsuccessful attempt to create state holdings to exert control over national companies, endangered social benefits for pensioners and lack of adequate housing for teachers and medical workers indicate that the days of the current government are numbered. Akhmetov, moreover, has many opponents in presidential entourage. Some political observers name the co-chairman of the presidential Otan party Aleksandr Pavlov, the advisor to the president Grigoriy Marchenko and minister of agriculture Akhmetzhan Yesimov as candidates for the post of prime minister. Whoever comes to head the government will assume a burdensome legacy.

KYRGYZSTAN’S INTENTION TO RETURN UZBEK REFUGEES CAUSES CONCERN

Aijan Baltabaeva

On June 23, General Procurator Azimbek Beknazarov informed parliamentarians that his Office intended to return 29 Uzbek refugees ostensibly involved in criminal cases who escaped from Uzbek prison during the Andijan events. Beknazarov had not consulted with the office of the United Nations High Commission on Refugees in Bishkek before making the decision. UNHCR provided camps and facilitated the process for according the status of asylum seekers to Uzbek citizens ousted from Uzbekistan after Andijan. Beknazarov marked the transfer of refugees as an internal affair of Kyrgyzstan into which no one should interfere.

The same day, a Human Rights Watch representative said such actions could violate

international obligations on human rights by sending refugees to “tortures and even death”. Uzbek officials demand the return of 130 refugees listed as members of the extremist organization Hizb-Ut-Tahrir that attempt to displace Islam Karimov’s regime and build an Islamic Caliphate in the region.

The presence of Uzbek refugees in Kyrgyzstan creates some tensions between the two countries. To prevent an aggravation of the situation, Kyrgyz authorities make concessions by systematically transferring some refugees to Uzbek law enforcement bodies. On the other hand, this attitude on the part of Kyrgyz authorities is met with a negative assessment by the international community. The US Embassy, HRW as well as

UNHCR had earlier expressed concerns with the departure of four refugees the fortune of whom is not known. The U.S. Embassy promised to resettle refugees to third countries to provide security.

However, Uzbek authorities pressure the Kyrgyz government to transfer refugees as soon as possible. Presently, the list of individuals increased to 131, 31 of whom are citizens of the Kyrgyz Republic. An Uzbek investigation found that 20 armed groupings involved in the banned Islamic movement Hizb-Ut-Tahrir and its splinter movement Akramiya had specially prepared the Andijan disturbances in a bid to seize power. During the Andijan clashes, some 200 persons were killed, and 540 persons fled the country. Among them were accused businessmen that escaped from prison.

29-year-old Shamsudin Otamanov launched his own business early 1998. To the present, his business has grown and provided jobs for 22 employees. "On June 9, 2004 National Security Service officers came to my office and told I was called to come by the council of elders. I went out of my office, sat down in a car, but was stopped by NSS employees and arrested. If I was accused of doing something illegal, why did they not hand me an official memo? I think, because, my business success had been disappointing somebody".

Otamanov said he was shown pictures of well-known businessmen in Andijan. Then, they stated that prohibited extremist leaflets were found in his car. Three days later, an arrest order signed by the general procurator was presented to him, accusing

him of involvement in terrorism. He claims he was forced under duress to sign all documents and confess. He was convicted to 55 years of imprisonment.

30-year-old Ortikbay Akbarov has four children left in Uzbekistan. Akbarov told a similar story, that after his small business had grown to medium size he had been called by the NSS. "When I came, they searched me, put a bag on my head, handcuffed me. After that there were numerous interrogations with constants beating. To the question why, they answered, because I was an Akramiya adherent". Akbarov was also sentenced to 55 years.

Standing on the parliamentary tribune, General Procurator Beknazarov said, "There are simple criminals in the refugee camp. We should not to make the mistake of giving them the status of refugees. During the Andijan events some criminals ran away from prison and we will give them back to Uzbekistan".

HRW Bishkek representative Acacia Shields stated that Kyrgyz authorities should have no doubt that handing the refugees over to Uzbekistan would have negatives consequences. Shields noted that a "special UN rapporteur on torture concluded that Uzbekistan systematically apply torture in prisons. And this where Kyrgyz authorities intended to send people". Kyrgyz authorities plan to transfer the refugees within a week.

TURKMENISTAN AND UKRAINE FIND A COMMON DEAL ON GAS SUPPLIES

Chemen Durdiyeva

Last week, representatives of the Ukrainian National Oil and Gas Company "Naftogaz" arrived in Ashgabat for special talks with Turkmen counterparts on gas supplies to Ukraine. Headed by

Aleksei Grigoryevich, the committee held direct talks with President Niyazov and delivered the Ukrainian president Viktor Yushchenko's personal invitation for Turkmenbashi to visit Ukraine in

September. As negotiations on gas deals ended on Friday, June 24, the results appeared to mark a major positive step after last year's rift over gas prices.

Being located in a land-locked region, Turkmenistan has searched for a market for its huge gas reserves ever since independence. Ukraine constitutes a major trade partner for Turkmenistan's energy sector. As a part of a bilateral agreement on gas supplies signed in May 2001 in Kiev, Turkmenistan has been supplying Ukraine with over than 30 billion cbm of gas annually at the price of US\$44 per 1,000 cbm. According to the terms of the contract, Ukraine has been making 50% of payments in cash and the rest in goods and services to different sectors of the Turkmen economy. The first Deputy Prime Minister of Ukraine, Anatolii Kinach, was earlier reported saying that Turkmenistan is "a very important factor of Ukraine's energy safety, and cooperation with Ukraine will enable Turkmenistan to earn about 30% of its state budget." However, this cooperation cooled down in January of 2005 when the Turkmen side unilaterally turned down the spigot of gas pipes to Ukraine.

The Turkmen side stated that Ukraine fell short of providing goods and services timely as indicated in contract. Moreover, Ukraine reportedly was overcharging for goods delivered to Turkmenistan as a part of the barter deal. Mainly because of this, the gas price of \$44 per 1,000 cbm was raised to \$58 and this situation has ever since created a gridlock for the Ukrainian side as well. Ukraine tried a series of negotiations to keep the gas price unchanged. After coming to power with the so-called "Orange Revolution" in Ukraine, President Yushenko made his first two-day state visit to Turkmenistan in March of this year. But no real consensus had been achieved after the presidential meetings either. However, this time, President Niyazov helped to find a common ground over the price deals.

At last week's meeting in Ashgabat, the Turkmen and Ukrainian sides discussed the issue in detail and came to an agreement that Turkmenistan starts exporting the blue fuel starting from July 1, 2005 again. According to the contract signed at the meeting, Ukraine will make all the payments in

cash, hence the barter deal has been completely cancelled. However, "Naftogaz" of Ukraine is obliged to deliver all the goods, worth \$600 million, previously owed as a part of barter deals, by December 31, 2005. The total amount of gas supplies for the rest of 2005 and the year of 2006 is expected to amount up to \$2 billion 134 million.

Aleksei Grigoryevich assured Mr. Niyazov that Ukraine will gradually pay off all its debt for previously supplied gas until the end of this year. Upon this, Mr. Niyazov agreed that the previous price of \$44 US per 1,000 cbm would remain unchanged for a while. However, it was also noted that the prices for gas might rise again. "Keep in mind that we will have to increase the price up to \$60 US in 2006" said Niyazov after signing the bilateral agreement. "We had historically important negotiations with the president" said Aleksei Grigoryevich after the meeting with the President. He also noted that Ukraine is ready to make every effort to build robust relations with Turkmenistan. Not long ago, prior to the 13th anniversary of Mr. Niyazov's presidency, Viktor Maiko, ambassador of Ukraine to Turkmenistan also presented the translation of *Ruhnama* (volume II) in the Ukrainian language.

In addition to deal on gas supplies, the Ukrainian side also asked for an extension of their investment projects in Turkmenistan. Mr. Niyazov invited the group to the construction of a highway from the capital city Ashgabat to Mary, roughly 300 km away. Moreover, it was also mentioned at the talks that "Naftogaz" would also be invited for the reconstruction of Seidi oil refinery as well.

Thus, a new contract signed this time between the Ukrainian giant "Naftogaz" and President Niyazov is expected to bring an utmost transparency in gas supplies to Ukraine. If the deal works out as stipulated in the bilateral agreement, Mr. Niyazov and Mr. Yushchenko are expected to sign an agreement on long-term partnership in energy sector at a meeting in September in Ukraine.

TBILISI MAYOR TO BE INDIRECTLY ELECTED

Kakha Jibladze

This week the Georgian parliament voted on the first hearing of amendments to elect the mayor of Tbilisi through the City Hall rather than through direct elections. This decision not only further strengthens the ruling party's hold on national politics and gives the opposition new ground to gain public support, but it undermines President Mikheil Saakashvili's repeated goal to establish democracy in Georgia.

Just weeks after the parliament passed a law allowing the president to nominate both the leadership and all the members of the Central Election Commission (CEC), the government passed the first reading for amendments concerning mayoral elections in Tbilisi and elections to the City Hall. The new legislation calls for indirect elections of the Tbilisi mayor through the City Hall, and makes changes in the manner the members of City Hall are elected, thus making it easier for the ruling party, the National Movement, to obtain complete control of the Sakrabulo, or City Hall, the CEC, and the capital's mayor. These changes indicate a shift toward further consolidating power in the hands of the ruling party and stifling opposition to their policies.

Until recently, the capital's mayor was appointed by the government. In fact, Saakashvili himself served as mayor when he was the head of the Sakrabulo before becoming president. During that time, when he was leader of the opposition, he called for direct elections to the mayoral position. Now he is saying that a directly elected mayor will become 'politicized' and the office should not become a political tool.

Nino Burjanadze, the speaker of the Georgian parliament, spoke out this week in favor of indirect elections. In a report published by Rustavi 2, she said that a directly elected mayor in the capital would lead to political tactics and games, something she believes will hinder the government's ability to rule. She also stated that since Georgia is already a

democratic nation, such measures should not be viewed as anti-democratic.

However, according to opposition leaders, this decision is just the latest in a long line of measures that serve to isolate the political minority and bar the opposition from the political process in Georgia. While these allegations are nothing new – the opposition has been accusing Saakashvili and his government of authoritarian tactics since the revolution – this is possibly the first time that opposition protests have been based on concrete facts instead of emotional pleas.

And their arguments are finding support among Georgians, particularly among citizens of the capital who seem, according to reports by Georgian media, to want to directly elect their mayor. While earlier the opposition was viewed as weak and disorganized, it is now gaining popular support.

According to political analysts, a stronger opposition will be good for the development of democracy in Georgia. However, the steps already taken by the ruling party, like the new CEC and the 7% vote requirement for seats in parliament, cause concern that the new opposition will not have the opportunity to flex their new political muscle.

Opposition parties themselves this week pledged not to participate in any elections until the issue is addressed. According to a report by The Georgian Messenger, they are hoping this tactic will lead to international pressure to change the law in their favor.

But changing the law to support opposition candidates will also work in Saakashvili's favor in the long term. If the object of his presidency – as he himself stated in an article recently published in the West – is to form a strong democracy, then it is his role to foster political discussions. A strong opposition is a fundamental factor of a democracy and, instead of being an opponent of building democracy, it is in fact a needed balancing device to create a healthy political climate. And that could be the greatest legacy of the Rose Revolution.

NEWS DIGEST

IRAN TO CONTRIBUTE \$180 MILLION TO HYDROPOWER PROJECT IN TAJIKISTAN

15 June

At a meeting in Dushanbe on 15 June, President Imomali Rakhmonov and Ebrahim Sheibani, who heads the Iranian Central Bank, discussed an agreement between Iran and Tajikistan to construct the Sangtuda-2 hydropower plant in Tajikistan. Under an agreement that energy ministers from the two countries signed in Tehran on 11 June, Iran will contribute \$180 million and Tajikistan \$40 million. Work on the project, which is slated to take four years, will begin this summer. (Khovar)

KAZAKHSTAN READY TO PROTECT U.S. ECONOMIC INTERESTS

Jun 15 2005

Kazakhstan will work to safeguard the economic interests of the United States in the country, Foreign Minister Kasymzhomart Tokayev told an international business conference in Almaty on Wednesday. "We highly appreciate the fact that the U.S. accounts for 50% of the investments Kazakhstan has received. For our part, we are ready to protect the economic interests of the United States in Kazakhstan by passing laws and through other methods. We are deeply confident of the firmness of contacts with major companies and will not change this position," Tokayev said. (Interfax)

SAKASHVILI TO FIGHT CRIME IN S. OSSETIA

15 June

Georgian President Mikheil Saakashvili said that he will not put up with the "criminal rampage" in South Ossetia. At a Wednesday session of the Georgian Security Council, Saakashvili said that Georgian's law enforcement agencies have reliable information about the people who abducted four Georgians in Tskhinvali on June 6. "We chose the peaceful way of settling the Tskhinvali region conflict and are ready for an open dialogue, but the Georgian authorities will not tolerate chaos and criminal disorder," Saakashvili said. (Interfax)

UN BEGINS ANDIJON INVESTIGATION IN KYRGYZSTAN

16 June

A four-member team from the Office of the UN High Commissioner on Human Rights (OHCHR) on 15 June began a 10-day investigation of the 13 May violence in Uzbekistan, RFE/RL reported. Because Uzbekistan has rejected calls for an international investigation, the team will operate in Kyrgyzstan. "They are going to be interviewing eyewitnesses and other people with firsthand knowledge of the events in Andijon in May," OHCHR spokesman Diaz told RFE/RL. The team's investigation will examine independent accounts indicating that hundreds of unarmed demonstrators were killed when Uzbek government forces opened fire on them on 13 May; Uzbek authorities insist that 173 people were killed in a clash between police and religious extremists. "They [the team] are going to be reporting back upon their return to the high commissioner for human rights," Diaz said, according to the UN Integrated Regional Information Networks. "That report is going to contain their findings and recommendations about how to take any investigative work forward." (RFE/RL)

UZBEK PROSECUTORS UNVEIL NEW NUMBERS ON ANDIJON UNREST

16 June

Anvar Nabiev, Uzbekistan's deputy prosecutor-general, announced on 16 June that 176 people were killed in unrest in Andijon on 13 May. The previous official death toll had been 173. Nabiev identified 79 of those killed as "terrorists." He said that the "terrorists" seized 65 hostages, killing 14 of them. In subsequent clashes, the "terrorists" killed 20 policemen, 11 soldiers, and 45 ordinary residents. The identities of 21 people who were killed are still being established, Nabiev said. (RIA-Novosti)

SOUTH, NORTH OSSETIAN LEADERS PUSH FOR UNIFICATION

16 June

President Eduard Kokoity of the self-proclaimed republic of South Ossetia has welcomed a statement by Taimuraz Mamusurov, the new head of the Russian internal republic of North Ossetia, who said the two republics should be unified. "South Ossetia's incorporation into Russia and its unification with North Ossetia is necessary and inevitable," Kokoity

told Interfax on Thursday. "An overwhelming majority of South Ossetian residents have Russian citizenship," he said. In an interview published in the Thursday issue of *Novaya Gazeta*, Mamusurov said that he does not see any other future for South Ossetia and North Ossetia than their unification. "I believe there is the only prospect. Ossetians are a divided people, we were divided within one country. Therefore, there can be no other option but unification," he said. (Interfax)

EMBATTLED INGUSH LEADER RECONFIRMED FOR FIVE-YEAR TERM

16 June

On 14 June, the Ingushetian parliament amended the republic's constitution to stipulate that the parliament confirms and empowers the Russian president's nominee for the post of president of Ingushetia, who serves for a period of five years. Murat Zyazikov, who submitted his resignation to President Putin on 2 June with a request that he be renominated, which Putin duly did, signed the amendment the same day. On 15 June, presidential envoy to the Southern Federal District Dmitrii Kozak presented Zyazikov to the Ingushetian parliament, and 30 of the 31 deputies present voted in favor of Zyazikov's reappointment. The sole dissenter was reportedly opposition leader Musa Ozdov, who expressed disappointment that fellow deputies who disapprove of Zyazikov and have expressed their support for Ozdov failed to vote against Zyazikov. Two deputies who, according to Ozdov, would also have rejected Zyazikov's renomination were absent from the session. Ozdov termed Zyazikov's reappointment "yet another tragedy for the Ingush people." He predicted that the hatred of the Ingush for Zyazikov will mutate into hatred of the Russian leadership, and consequently Russia's control over the North Caucasus will be weakened. (RFE/RL)

RESIDENTS LEAVE CHECHEN VILLAGE FOR DAGHESTAN

16 June

Residents of the village of Borozdinovskaya in Chechnya's Shelkovskii Raion are planning to take their belongings and resettle in a tent camp in Kizlyar Raion. The villagers, most of whom belong to ethnic groups indigenous to Daghestan, fear for their safety in the wake of the abduction of 11 villagers during a sweep operation on 4 June. (Interfax)

KYRGYZ FORCES BREAK UP THE PROTESTS

17 June

Police in Kyrgyzstan have used tear gas in the capital, Bishkek, to disperse hundreds of protesters who had occupied part of the main government building. At least 20 people are said to have been hurt in the unrest, which saw protesters driven into side streets. The demonstrators support a candidate barred from July's presidential poll, but the acting leader has blamed the unrest on followers of his predecessor. Kyrgyzstan has seen continuing tension since the former leader fled in March. Kurmanbek Bakiyev became acting president after a wave of protests sparked by disputed parliamentary elections. He warned the authorities were ready to use force if required, following Friday's unrest. "I will defend this government with a gun in my hands if necessary," he said. The interim government has struggled to assert its authority since coming to power. Various interest groups have decided demonstrations are the best way to force the government to acknowledge their complaints, he adds. Friday's incident is the biggest public protest since former President Askar Akayev was driven into exile. The unrest came after some 1,000 people rallied in Bishkek in support of businessman Urmatbek Baryktabasov, whom officials say is a citizen of neighbouring Kazakhstan. Protesters also called for Mr Bakiyev to step down. Officials fled the site when the crowd broke into the government complex in the city centre. Police and troops armed with truncheons and shields ousted them first from the building and finally from the adjoining square. Speaking after the incident, Mr Bakiyev told reporters "events were organised by people close to Akayev". "I will not run away," he added. The acting defence minister told the parliamentary session that armed forces would be deployed on Friday night to maintain order. Shops in the area have closed for fear of the looting that followed the March uprising. (BBC)

KYRGYZ ECONOMIC INDICATORS REGISTER DOWNTURN

17 June

Ulan Sarbanov, head of Kyrgyzstan's Central Bank, announced at a press conference in Bishkek on 16 June that inflation has risen 5 percent since the beginning of the year, RFE/RL's Kyrgyz Service reported. Prices for food products have jumped 13.5 percent. Sarbanov called rising inflation worrisome but not catastrophic. He also pointed to an increasing trade deficit, which now stands at \$112 million as compared to \$45.7 million last year. He commented, "The situation is not improving, and there are signs that the trade deficit is growing." (RFE/RL)

KYRGYZ OFFICIAL CONFIRMS 12 UZBEK ASYLUM SEEKERS MOVED FROM CAMP TO DETENTION

17 June

Baitemir Ibraev, a prosecutor in Kyrgyzstan's Jalal-Abad Oblast, told RFE/RL's Kyrgyz Service on 16 June that 12 Uzbek asylum seekers have been transferred from a camp to a detention facility in Osh. According to information provided by Uzbek authorities, the 12, who were part of a group of more than 400 asylum seekers currently housed in a camp in Jalal-Abad Oblast, had been serving prison terms in Andijon on charges of religious extremism, Ibraev said. They were freed during a prison break on the night of 12 May and subsequently fled to Kyrgyzstan. Ibraev said that other asylum seekers suspected of playing a role in unrest in Andijon on 13 May will also be transferred to the detention facility in Osh for additional investigation. (RFE/RL)

OPPOSITION RALLY IN AZERI CAPITAL

19 June

Some 20,000 people have marched in Azerbaijan's capital Baku demanding free and fair elections and calling for the president to resign. It is the second time in the past two weeks that Azerbaijan's government has allowed the opposition to hold a rally. It was organized by three leading opposition parties which form the the Azadlig or Freedom bloc. And as the race for the November parliamentary poll heats up, the opposition says it will stage more. There was a sea of orange flags and T-shirts as thousands of demonstrators filled Baku's main square. Police in riot gear encircled the rally and some people said they were stopped from entering the square. All the same, young people in orange headbands gave flowers to the policemen to show their protest was peaceful. This is what activists in Azerbaijan have learned from Ukraine's so-called orange revolution and a peaceful revolution is what many of them say they will push for if the government fails to ensure that the November poll is free and fair. (BBC)

KYRGYZ AUTHORITIES ARREST EX-SPEAKER OF PARLIAMENT

20 June

Bishkek police chief Omurbek Subanaliev told RFE/RL's Kyrgyz Service on 19 June that police have arrested Mukar Cholponbaev, the former speaker of Kyrgyzstan's parliament, in connection with unrest in the capital on 17 June. Subanaliev alleged that Cholponbaev led the effort to seize the main government building in Bishkek on 17 June.

Subanaliev added that Kyrgyz police have issued a warrant for the arrest of would-be presidential candidate Baryktabasov, who authorities allege was the financier and organizer of the 17 June demonstration. Baryktabasov is currently in Kazakhstan, according to Subanaliev, and Kyrgyz prosecutors have appealed to their Kazakh colleagues for assistance in detaining him. (RFE/RL)

KAZAKH FOREIGN MINISTER URGES RETHINK ON NGO BILLS

20 June

Foreign Minister Qasymzhomart Toqayev told members of parliament on 20 June that two draft bills amending legislation on NGOs go against Kazakhstan's international obligations and should not be passed. Toqayev said that the legislation, if passed, could negatively impact the activities of UNESCO, the World Health Organization, and the OSCE in Kazakhstan. He stressed that this is especially worrisome in light of Kazakhstan's stated desire to chair the OSCE in 2009. The two bills in question have drawn criticism from NGOs, which charge that they will tighten state control over civil society. Darigha Nazarbaeva, the daughter of President Nursultan Nazarbaev and the head of the pro-presidential Asar Party, called on 26 May for the draft bill on international and foreign NGOs to be recalled. (Kazakhstan Today)

EXXON TO PAY \$30MLN FOR PULLING OUT OF AZERI FIELD

20 June

U.S. oil major Exxon Mobil will pay Azerbaijan around \$30 million in compensation after giving up on exploring the Nakhichevan oil field in the Caspian Sea, the head of the Azeri state oil firm said on Monday. "We have concluded our discussions with Exxon Mobil on Nakhichevan," Natic Aliyev, president of Azeri state oil firm SOCAR, told reporters. "The amount of compensation will be around \$30 million." An exploration well drilled in 2002 did not find commercial quantities of oil and earlier this year Exxon pulled out of drilling at a second site on Nakhichevan. SOCAR will now discuss with Exxon its claim for compensation for pulling out of another Caspian field, Zafar Mashal, where it spent \$150 million fruitlessly in 2004. Exxon is still involved in three Azeri projects, although two have been frozen by a territorial dispute between Azerbaijan and Iran. (Reuters)

OSCE RENEWS CALL FOR UZBEK INVESTIGATION

21 June

The OSCE announced in a 20 June press release on the organization's website (<http://www.osce.org>) that OSCE Chairman-in-Office and Slovenian Foreign Minister Dimitrij Rupel "has reiterated his call for a credible, independent, and international investigation" into events in Andijon, Uzbekistan on 13 May. The press release coincided with an OSCE report on events in Andijon based on eyewitness testimony from Uzbek asylum seekers in Kyrgyzstan. The report concluded that "force was used repeatedly against unarmed civilians [in Andijon on 13 May]," adding that "[a]n estimate based on the information given by refugees would indicate that 300-500 people may have been killed on 13 May." The report was based on 44 in-depth interviews with Uzbek asylum seekers in Kyrgyzstan because the OSCE did not have access to Andijon. (RFE/RL)

LEADING KYRGYZ PRESIDENTIAL CONTENDER, ALLY REAFFIRM PACT

21 June

Leading presidential candidate and acting President Kurmanbek Bakiev and Feliks Kulov, head of the Arnamys Party, announced in a joint appeal on 20 June that their alliance remains strong in the lead-up to the 10 July presidential election, RFE/RL's Kyrgyz Service reported. The two noted that they have given up their posts in the government for the duration of the presidential campaign in order to prevent any untoward use of so-called "administrative resources." In light of recent unrest in Bishkek, they stated, "We warn that rioting will be countered as harshly as possible. Stability and order are what the people of Kyrgyzstan now need. It was for this reason that our alliance was created." Bakiev has promised to appoint Kulov prime minister if he is elected president. (RFE/RL)

AZERBAIJANI PRESIDENT PARDONS 100 PRISONERS

21 June

Ilham Aliyev signed a decree on 20 June pardoning 100 prisoners "on humanitarian grounds." The 100 include 27 persons from a list of 107 designated political prisoners by the Council of Europe, together with Rza Guliev, the nephew of self-exiled opposition Democratic Party of Azerbaijan Chairman Rasul Guliev. Rza Guliev was sentenced six years ago to eight years' imprisonment on charges of embezzlement. But Murad Sadaddinov, who is

president of the Fund for the Protection of Democracy and Human Rights, told Turan that three people considered political prisoners by the Council of Europe – Elchin Amiraslanov, Arif Kazimov and Safa Poladov – were not among those pardoned. (Turan)

AZERBAIJAN INSISTS ON CONTROL OF LACHIN CORRIDOR

21 June

Azerbaijan's Deputy Foreign Minister Araz Azimov told journalists in Baku on 20 June that the Paris talks resulted in a rapprochement between the two sides' positions concerning unspecified aspects of the peace process. Azimov said the Paris talks focused on "various aspects," of which the most important to Azerbaijan is the liberation of Azerbaijani territories currently under Armenian control and creating "normal conditions" for the return to those districts of Azerbaijani displaced persons. He suggested that in the initial stage, international peacekeepers could be deployed to those districts. Azimov also said that the highway that connects the unrecognized Nagorno-Karabakh Republic with Armenia (the so-called Lachin corridor) should be under Azerbaijani control, while both sides should have the use of the remaining sections of the highway from Azerbaijani's Agdam District via Karabakh, Lachin, and Armenia to the Nakhichevan Autonomous Republic. (echo-az.com)

ARMENIA DESCRIBES PARIS KARABAKH TALKS AS 'CONSTRUCTIVE'

21 June

Armenian Foreign Minister Vartan Oskanian told journalists in Yerevan on 20 June that his talks three days earlier in Paris with his Azerbaijani counterpart Elmar Mammadyarov on approaches to resolving the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict were "positive" and "constructive," RFE/RL's Armenian Service reported. At the same time, Oskanian admitted that he and Mammadyarov failed to build on the "small step forward" achieved one month earlier in Warsaw by the two countries' presidents. Oskanian told journalists last week that he hoped it would prove possible in Paris to formalize in a written text the agreements reached in Warsaw. Oskanian said the two sides are working on "all elements of a package settlement," but stressed, as he has done previously, that he considers it pointless to address other issues until "clarity" is reached regarding the future status of the unrecognized Nagorno-Karabakh Republic. (RFE/RL)

KUWAIT FUND TO FINANCE UZBEK RAIL PROJECT

22 June

The Kuwait Fund for Arab Economic Development (KFAED) will provide a \$21 million loan to electrify the 115-kilometer railway linking Tashkent and Angren. The agreement was signed during a visit to Uzbekistan by Hisham Al-Waqayan, KFAED's deputy director for operations and distribution. In the course of his visit, Al-Waqayan met with Uzbek Finance Minister Saidahmad Rahimov and Uzbek railways head Ochilboy Ramatov. The railway electrification project is slated for completion in 2008. (UzA)

RUSSIA PEACEKEEPERS SHOULD STAY ON IN ABKHAZIA

22 June

"The Russian peacekeeping forces should stay in Abkhazia until the Georgian-Abkhazian conflict is completely settled," Sergei Bagapsh, the head of the unrecognised republic of Abkhazia, told a news conference in Sukhumi on Wednesday. Even though the peacekeepers are formally called "the Collective peacekeeping forces of the CIS", it is Russia alone that has been bearing the burden of the peacekeeping operation all these eleven years, Bagapsh said. He declared against the replacement of the Russian peacekeepers with any other forces. Bagapsh came out for the resumption of the through railway traffic over Abkhazia, as this is "in the framework of the March 2003 Sochi accords." He is, however, against the linkage of the resumption of railway traffic with political questions, the way Tbilisi does it. Bagapsh regards this as a "purely economic question. Abkhazia does not accept any political conditions in this connection." The Abkhazian head expressed concern with the build up of the military potential by the Georgian side. "While talking about favouring a peaceful settlement of the Georgian-Abkhazian conflict, Georgia, which has a spate of social problems, increased its allocations for the military purposes to 300 million dollars. It is apparent against whom this is directed. So we reinforce and will continue to reinforce the defence potential of our army," Bagapsh said. Bagapsh confirmed that Abkhazia's course is oriented at Russia. He said Abkhazia's legislation is being brought in keeping with Russian legislation, since Russia is Abkhazia's chief partner." "The main task of Abkhazia's new leadership is economic recovery and the improvement of citizens' living standards. Certain work is being done for the purpose.

Specific projects are being implemented, Bagapsh said. (Itar-Tass)

AFGHAN GIRLS' SCHOOL ATTACKED

23 June

Armed men have attacked and burned a girls' school in Afghanistan, police officials said. They tied up two guards before attacking the school in Logar province, south of the capital, Kabul. Police said the school's single small building and two tents used as classrooms had been doused in petrol and burnt to the ground. Girls have been going back to school since the Taleban regime was overthrown in December 2001. Under the Taleban they were barred from education. It was not yet known who was behind the attack on the Padkhwai Raghani School, officials said, but local men were being questioned. Hundreds of thousands of girls have returned to school since the Taleban was ousted, but there is still opposition in conservative areas of rural Afghanistan. There has been a spate of attacks on girls' schools across the country since 2001. The interior ministry spokesman Latfullah Mashal blamed Taleban militants, saying: "Burning of schools and education institutions is an agenda of the terrorists". The school's principal, Zaher Din, said he planned to resume classes for his 665 students by Saturday. The pupils are aged from seven to 15. "The children are desperate for their classes to resume. So many were crying when they saw the school was destroyed," he said. (BBC)

UZBEK EMBASSY REPORTS REQUEST FOR EXTRADITION OF ASYLUM SEEKERS FROM KYRGYZSTAN

23 June

Uzbekistan's embassy in Kyrgyzstan announced in a statement on 22 June that the Uzbek Prosecutor-General's Office has requested the extradition of at least 13 asylum seekers currently housed in a camp in Kyrgyzstan's Jalalabad Province, RFE/RL's Kyrgyz Service reported. "At present, 100 citizens of Uzbekistan and 31 citizens of Kyrgyzstan who are located in the tent city [in Kyrgyzstan] have been identified as direct participants in acts of terror and charged in absentia," the statement said. "Thirteen individuals in the camp were illegally freed by terrorists from prison [in Andijon on the night of 12 May], and requests have been conveyed for their detention and extradition to Uzbekistan," said the statement. The embassy also said that Uzbekistan has sent materials detailing criminal cases against the 31 Kyrgyz citizens to the Kyrgyz Prosecutor-General's Office. (RFE/RL)

SCHEFFER SPEAKS FOR INDEPENDENT INVESTIGATION OF ANDIZHAN

23 June

NATO Secretary General Jaap de Hoop Scheffer has expressed concern over recent events in Uzbekistan. Speaking at the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe on Thursday, de Hoop Scheffer said that unjustified force was used to suppress the rallies in Andizhan. NATO, in cooperation with European organizations, is ready to do everything necessary to establish freedom and democracy in Europe, De Hoop Scheffer said. He noted that the risk of a war in Europe is currently quite small. NATO intends to continue aiding the peace process in Afghanistan, he said. (Interfax)

KREMLIN ENVOY CONDEMNS CHECHEN SWEEP AS SABOTAGE

23 June

Presidential envoy to the Southern Federal District Dmitrii Kozak met in Grozny on 22 June with relatives of the Avar families who fled the Chechen village of Borozdinovskaya for neighboring Dagestan following a sweep operation on 4 June in which at least one person was killed and 11 were detained. Kozak condemned the sweep operation as "an act of sabotage directed against Chechnya, Dagestan, and Russia," and he vowed that those responsible will be apprehended and punished. The Prosecutor-General's Office of the Southern Federal District has launched an investigation into the operation, which the Russian human rights group Memorial said on 22 June was conducted by Sulim Yamadaev's Eastern Battalion. But "The Moscow Times" on 23 June quoted Yamadaev's brother Ruslan, who represents Chechnya in the Russian State Duma, as having denied Sulim's involvement in the sweep in an interview with a Dagestani newspaper on 21 June. (RFE/RL)

ARMENIAN, RUSSIAN PRESIDENTS MEET

23 June

Robert Kocharian and Vladimir Putin met in Moscow on 22 June on the eve of a CIS Collective Security Treaty Organization (ODKB) summit, RFE/RL's Armenian Service reported. While both presidents gave an overall positive assessment of bilateral relations, Kocharian noted the need to address problems in the energy sector. Those problems arise from Russia's failure to invest as promised in five Armenian enterprises it acquired in payment of Armenia's \$100 million debt. Putin for his part lauded

Armenia's decision to request observer status in the Eurasian

Economic Cooperation Organization. Armenian Defense Minister Serzh Sarkisian, who will also attend the ODKB summit, told journalists in Moscow on 22 June that he believes Armenia's membership of the ODKB "is one of the integral parts of Armenia's national security," RFE/RL's Armenian Service reported. He argued that planned increased cooperation with NATO will not negatively impact on Armenia's ODKB membership. (RFE/RL)

RAID FAILS TO NET TALEBAN CHIEFS

24 June

US and Afghan forces have wound up a bloody offensive in south Afghanistan but failed to find the Taliban leaders they hoped had been surrounded. Afghan officials say more than 100 Taliban fighters were killed in Zabul province in one of the biggest operations for two years. However, at least two top Taliban leaders radio intercepts suggested were present had not been traced. A Taliban spokesman had denied any leaders had been surrounded. US military spokesman, Lt Col Jerry O'Hara, told the AFP news agency: "It looks like the fighting has certainly died off and whatever enemy forces that were in the area that we didn't kill or capture might have fled." Earlier reports had placed Mullah Dadullah and Mullah Brader - both of whom are said to be close to Taliban leader Mullah Mohammed Omar - at the heart of the fighting. But the Afghan interior ministry said on Friday there was no confirmation of their presence - or of three other leading commanders. Ministry spokesman, Lutfullah Mashal, said: "Most of the terrorists have been killed, but a few escaped across the border into Pakistan." However, Mr Mashal said the operation had still been a success. "Their backbone has been broken. They will no longer be able to attack in a co-ordinated way," he said. The four-day operation had targeted what the US military called Taliban "safe havens" in mountainous regions. Most of the fighting took place in the Daychopan district of Zabul province, near the border with Kandahar province. Afghan police commander Gen Salim Khan said eight Afghan security force members had died. The US military said five US soldiers had been wounded. The US put the number of Taliban dead at 54 with 22 captured. Taliban spokesman, Latifullah Hakimi, said the commanders had not been surrounded and the number of dead had been exaggerated. "Mullah Dadullah and Mullah Brader are safe and sound. This is all just propaganda," he said. (BBC)

RUSSIAN, TAJIK DEFENSE MINISTERS SIGN BASE PROPERTY TRANSFER ACTS

24 June

Russian Defense Minister Sergei Ivanov and his Tajik counterpart Sherali Khairullayev on Friday in Dushanbe signed transfer acts on the movable property of the Russian military base. "The documents like the ones signed earlier permit for long-term plans of building both a Russian military base and the Nurek optical observation facility," Ivanov told reporters after the ceremony. "Even though it is the most advanced electronic facility having no analogs in the world we shall always be thinking of the future and looking at decades ahead," he said. (Interfax)

UN WARNS ABOUT AFGHAN INSTABILITY

25 June

The United Nation's top envoy for Afghanistan has said that violence is threatening security in the run-up to September's elections. Jean Arnault said that rebels loyal to the former Taleban had become more violent. His comments came as the Afghan and US-led forces ended a big military operation in southern Afghanistan. Afghanistan has seen some of its worst bloodshed in recent months, with a spate of attacks blamed on the Taleban. Mr Arnault told the UN Security Council that Afghanistan's national security was going through a "negative evolution". "The country is confronted with an escalation of both the number and gravity of incidents that affect several provinces," he said. "The situation is especially worrying in the southern provinces... and in Pashtun regions bordering with Pakistan." Mr Arnault said that the Afghan and Pakistani governments should reverse the tide of instability. US and Afghan forces wound up a bloody offensive in southern Afghanistan on Saturday. Afghan officials say more than 100 Taleban fighters were killed in Zabul province in what was one of the biggest operations for two years. But the forces failed to find the Taleban leaders they hoped had been surrounded. Correspondents say that barely a day goes by now without serious violence across south and east Afghanistan. The US has about 18,000 troops in Afghanistan tackling remnants of the Taleban regime that was ousted in late 2001. Nearly 400 people have been killed in Taleban-linked violence this year, following a lull during the winter - most of them suspected militants. (BBC)

IRAN TO MAINTAIN NUCLEAR POLICY

26 June

Iran's newly elected hardline President, Mahmoud

Ahmadinejad, has said his government will continue the country's nuclear programme. He told his first news conference after his election that the nuclear programme was needed to meet Iran's energy needs. The United States has accused Iran of using its atomic energy programme as a front to develop nuclear weapons. Mr Ahmadinejad appeared to rule out improving ties with Washington, saying Iran did not really need the US. The president-elect told reporters: "The peaceful nuclear technology has been the result of the scientific development of the young people of Iran. "Iran has a right to achieve scientific development in all fields. "We need the peaceful nuclear technology for energy, medical and agricultural purposes, and our scientific progress. "We need it for the development of our country and we shall carry on with it." Asked about talks between the European Union and Iran over its nuclear programme, he said: "With preserving national interests and by emphasising the right of the Iranian nation for using peaceful nuclear technology, we will continue the talks." Mr Ahmadinejad also said his government would be one of "peace and moderation", and that "co-existence" would be a foreign policy priority. And he defended the Iranian electoral system - heavily criticised by the US and others - which he said reflected the will of the Iranian people. In response to a question about relations with Washington, saying the people of Iran had "no significant need" for ties with the US. And he brushed aside questions on human rights in the Islamic republic, accusing European nations of suppressing religious rights and "other countries" of seeking "world domination". Mr Ahmadinejad, 49, won 62% of the vote in Friday's presidential run-off poll. He will be Iran's first non-cleric president for 24 years when he takes office in August. (BBC)

ARMENIAN, AZERBAIJANI FOREIGN MINISTERS DISCUSS KARABAKH

27 June

Armenian Foreign Minister Vardan Oskanian and his Azerbaijani counterpart Elmar Mamedyarov held brief talks in Brussels on a Nagorno-Karabakh settlement, Armenian Foreign Ministry spokesman Gamlet Gasparian told Interfax on Monday. "The Armenian and Azerbaijani foreign ministers held a 20-minute meeting in Brussels," Gasparian said. The talks were held within the framework of a forum on Iraq, he said. (Interfax)

MOVING RUSSIAN MILITARY EQUIPMENT TO ARMENIA NOT TO AFFECT KARABAKH SETTLEMENT

27 June

The redeployment of Russian military equipment from Georgia to the Russian Defence Ministry's base in Armenia will not change the balance of forces in the Karabakh conflict zone and will not hamper the quest for the ways of peaceful settlement. Konstantin Kosachev, the chairman of the Committee for International Relations of the State Duma lower house of parliament, expressed his confidence in this on Monday. He said, the Russian military bases are being speedily removed from the Georgian territory. The Russian military base situated in Gyumri, in the Armenian territory, is a possible place to which armaments and equipment can be moved from Akhalkalaki base.

"If Azerbaijan offered an opportunity for the deployment of military forces in its territory, Moscow would consent to this," Kosachev said. "Therefore, the redeployment of Russian military forces will not affect the prospects for erasing tension in relations between Armenia and Azerbaijan," he said. (Itar-Tass)

ABKHAZIA REJECTS ANY CONDITIONS IN RAIL TRAFFIC RESUMPTION

27 June

Abkhazia objects to linking the resumption of railroad traffic with the settlement of political problems, president of the unrecognized republic Sergei Bagapsh told Heidi Tagliavini, special representative of the UN Secretary General, on Monday. "Abkhazia does not accept any preliminary conditions. The Sochi agreement that Georgia and Russia signed in March 2003 stipulates the resumption of railroad traffic," the presidential information department quoted Bagapsh as saying. The two officials discussed the Georgian-Abkhaz peace settlement process, while Tagliavini told Bagapsh about preparations for a July security meeting under the UN's aegis. (Interfax)

KADYROV GUARANTEES SECURITY TO BOROZDINOVSKAYA

28 June

Chechnya's First Deputy Prime Minister Ramzan Kadyrov said he guarantees complete security for the citizens of Borozdinovskaya village, who fled their homes after a sweep operation on June 4. In accordance to a decree from Chechen President Alu Alkhanov, Kadyrov was appointed head of the state commission that is to investigate the

Borozdinovskaya incident. "I have given my word that the citizens of Borozdinovskaya will feel secure, and I will achieve this. I officially declare that I am ready to wage war on any structure that tries to do anything similar" to what happened in Borozdinovskaya, Kadyrov said during a meeting with a delegation of villagers from Dagestan on Tuesday. (Interfax)

ANDIZHAN PLOTTED BY AUTHORS OF COLORED REVOLUTIONS - KARIMOV

28 June

"The events in Andizhan were organized by the scriptwriters and directors of the 'colored' revolutions," Uzbek President Islam Karimov said on Tuesday. "It doesn't matter what we call these revolutions - tulip or orange ones. I would call them simply operations. These operations are being conducted on CIS territory most flagrantly and without any punishment," Karimov said while meeting with Russian President Vladimir Putin at Novo-Ogaryovo near Moscow. In Karimov's view, recent events "might have been speeded up by Uzbekistan's more independent policy and the rejection of some proposals." (Interfax)

SOKHUMI PROTESTS AGAINST TBILISI'S CLOSURE OF MARITIME BORDER

29 June

Defense Minister of breakaway Abkhazia Sultan Sosnaliev said on June 28 that Georgia's decision to close Abkhaz portion of the maritime border for all forms of maritime traffic is "interference in Abkhazia's internal affairs," Apsnipress news agency reported. He warned that "Abkhaz Defense Ministry will undertake adequate measures in case of necessity." The Georgian Foreign Ministry issued a statement on June 28 saying that the Abkhaz portion of the maritime border remains closed since last August. Tensions fueled between Tbilisi and Sokhumi last August after the Georgian coast guard opened fire to a Turkish vessel en route to Abkhazia. Abkhaz Foreign Ministry described the Georgian Foreign Ministry's June 28 statement as "a provocation." The authorities in breakaway Abkhazia say that Tbilisi tries to spark tensions in the region every summer, when Abkhazia anticipates tourists mainly from Russia. Abkhaz Interior Minister Otar Khetsia told Apsnipress on June 28, that the law enforcement agencies "will do everything" to ensure security of tourists in Abkhazia. (Civil Georgia)