

Central Asia-Caucasus Analyst

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Central Asia- Caucasus Institute
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THE CENTRAL ASIA-CAUCASUS ANALYST

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KEY ISSUE: A short 75-word statement of your conclusions about the issue or news event on which the article focuses.

BACKGROUND: 300-450 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: 300-450 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.

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

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

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TRANS-CASPIAN TREPIDATIONS: HOW SERIOUS?

Alexandros Petersen

This summer's dispute over undersea Caspian energy resources between Azerbaijan and Turkmenistan, as well as Ashgabat's recently stated intention to bolster its maritime military capabilities, have seemingly thrown Trans-Caspian relations into a tailspin, jeopardizing plans for energy cooperation to supply the strategic Nabucco natural gas pipeline. Given the Caspian's delicate geopolitical balance, an international arbitration process on the Azerbaijani-Turkmen dispute may not in fact result in final resolution. That said, developments surrounding the mid-September informal Caspian summit, attended by presidents Ilham Aliyev and Gurbanguly Berdimuhammedov may signal that this Trans-Caspian flare-up will be short-lived.

BACKGROUND: Trans-Caspian relations between Azerbaijan and Turkmenistan have a history of great potential and disappointing realization. Geographically, the two countries are excellently positioned to facilitate bridging the water hazard that is the Caspian in the effort to grow trans-Eurasian trade, political, security and energy links. But the relationship between Ashgabat and Baku during former Turkmen President Saparmurat Niyazov's term in office was often described as a "cold war". Since his successor, Gurbanguly Berdimuhammedov, came to power, the two shores of the Caspian had not only reconciled, but begun genuine cooperation and serious momentum towards resolving the crux of Trans-Caspian tensions: overlapping claims on the central Caspian gas field of Serdar/Kyapaz.

That was the case until this July, when negotiations fell apart and Berdimuhammedov said that Turkmenistan would take the issue to international arbitration. This was followed by an announcement in late August that the Turkmen navy and coastguard will build a joint base in Turkmenbashi to "effectively fight smugglers, terrorists and any other forces." Baku's response has been measured, but

Azerbaijani decision-makers are very concerned that these moves could signal an abandonment of Berdimuhammedov's ambitions for functional links to the West.

The implications are particularly serious for the strategic Nabucco natural gas pipeline, which would connect the Caspian's resources, through Turkey, to European Union consumers. Azerbaijani gas reserves will likely be sufficient to supply the Nabucco project's first, lower capacity phase. For a long time, Turkmen gas was considered essential to realizing the pipeline's planned annual 31 billion cubic meter capacity in the project's second phase. This would almost certainly require the construction of a Trans-Caspian gas pipeline, linking Turkmenbashi and Baku, a daunting feat in and of itself. Questions about the viability of linking Nabucco to Turkmen reserves have already been raised by energy analysts unconvinced that fields on the eastern shore of the Caspian can be developed fast enough, and by Russia and Iran, which insist that the sea must first be delimited before any Trans-Caspian projects can take place.

The objections from Moscow and Tehran do not pass muster, as a bilateral agreement



(Trend News)

between Ashgabat and Baku, similar to agreements amongst Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan and Russia in the north Caspian, would certainly allow for joint projects. But the longer that the Azerbaijani-Turkmen dispute continues, the less likely it is that Nabucco will be linked to the eastern Caspian. Until recently, this had contributed to the Nabucco project's perceived lack of viability. However, since the signing of an intergovernmental agreement between the Nabucco transit countries in mid-July, potential suppliers such as Iraq and Egypt

are seriously considering taking part in the project. The danger now may not be that Nabucco will not be realized, but rather that Turkmenistan will be left out. Should the Azerbaijani-Turkmen dispute not be resolved soon, it is increasingly conceivable that Nabucco will primarily be a pipeline carrying gas to Europe from the Middle East, not the Caspian.

IMPLICATIONS: The implications of Turkmenistan's stated decision to seek international arbitration for the dispute with Azerbaijan over undersea resources are not as clear as some Caspian watchers have argued. So far, analysis has been split between those who argue that the recent Ashgabat-Baku row represents a nearly insurmountable obstacle to Trans-Caspian cooperation and those who point out that perhaps the intervention of an international legal body is exactly what the contentious issue needs in

order to be settled once and for all.

International arbitration does not necessarily add clarity or finality to the picture, however. First of all, it is not clear which body Turkmenistan intends to approach. There are separate arbitration courts involved in the energy sector in London, Paris and Stockholm, but the territorial dispute at the center of the Caspian dilemma will likely have to be filed with the International Court of Justice (ICJ) in the Hague, if the court found it had jurisdiction,

an additional complication since Azerbaijan has not accepted its compulsory jurisdiction. This complicates the issue significantly, as both parties would have to submit the issue, and a decision may not be reached for several years. Second, the party keen to arbitrate is generally considered by legal scholars as that with the weaker case: Turkmenistan argues that Azerbaijan's Absheron peninsula should not be taken into account when drawing a line through the Caspian, but it most likely will be considered. Third, international arbitration, particularly when natural resources are concerned, does not always lead to settled relations, much less cooperation between the disputed parties. Romania-Ukraine relations have remained unconstructive since the ICJ delineated the continental shelf and its significant resources around Snake Island largely in favor of Romania.

Finally, this particular dispute may not only not be insurmountable, but could prove to be short-lived. Unlike his predecessor, Berdimuhammedov actively participates in regional and international fora. On September 11, the presidents of Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Russia and Turkmenistan met outside Aktau for what was dubbed an informal Caspian summit. While some reports cited that the divvying-up of energy resources was off the discussion table, no set agenda was announced, and Aliyev did speak with his Turkmen counterpart. Crucially, Berdimuhammedov went out of his way to publicly announce that although Ashgabat remains committed to the 40 bcm natural gas pipeline to China and is interested in potentially revitalizing the Trans-Afghan or TAPI gas pipeline to Pakistan and India (probably 30 bcm), Turkmenistan will have enough gas to supply Nabucco at 31 bcm.

His statement did not mention supplies to Russia, and a meeting with Dmitry Medvedev a few days later did not result in a renewed gas export deal with Moscow.

Berdimuhammedov's pointed mention of Nabucco indicates that he does not expect the row with Azerbaijan to drag on. This analysis is bolstered by his invitation of Aliyev to Ashgabat just before the summit, specifically to discuss the Serdar/Kyapaz issue. The geopolitical realities of the Caspian region mean that presidential-level talks are more likely to result in a resolution of the Trans-Caspian dispute than prolonged legal efforts.

CONCLUSIONS: The Trans-Caspian dispute between Azerbaijan and Turkmenistan must see quick resolution or risk undermining the eastern Caspian's role in the strategic Nabucco project. It seems as if leaders in Ashgabat and Baku understand this and are moving towards the high-level dialogue that will be necessary to achieve resolution. Such a path should be considered preferable to what would likely be a long and contentious legal struggle should the issue go to international arbitration. All of this said, the objective of Russia's parallel energy diplomacy in the region, which is consistently conducted at the highest level, is aimed at orienting Turkmenistan's gas exports away from a Trans-Caspian option. A final resolution for the Serdar/Kyapaz issue is a necessary, but not sufficient condition for Nabucco to be primarily a pipeline to the Caspian.

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TURKEY AND ARMENIA SEEK TO NORMALIZE RELATIONS

Haroutiun Khachatryan

Turkey and Armenia have declared their intention to sign two Protocols next month, aimed at normalizing their relations and opening their common border, which has been closed by Turkey since 1993. To that end, Turkey has seemingly eased some of its previous preconditions, including on the genocide question and demands for progress on the Nagorno-Karabakh issue in Azerbaijan's favor. However, further progress seems difficult, as strong opposition to the process exists in both countries, providing significant obstacles to the signing and implementation of the agreements.

BACKGROUND: On August 31, Turkey and Armenia made public the initiated texts of two draft Protocols aimed at normalizing and further developing relations between the two countries. In an accompanying joint press release by the foreign ministries of these countries and the Swiss federal department of foreign affairs, which had acted as a mediator in the Armenian-Turkish negotiations since 2005, the parties stated: "The two Protocols provide for a framework for the normalization of their bilateral relations within a reasonable timeframe."

Under the Protocols, both countries will hold internal political consultations during the next six weeks, thereafter the Protocols will be signed and submitted for ratification to the respective parliaments. They are to enter into force in the month following the exchange of the instruments of ratification. Two months later, a working group will be formed to prepare "the working modalities of the intergovernmental commission and its sub-commissions," and the common border between the two countries is expected to open by that time as well.

Turkey recognized the Republic of Armenia immediately after the breakdown of the Soviet

Union in late 1991. However, Ankara refused to establish diplomatic relations with Yerevan until two preconditions were fulfilled: recognition of the common border and abolition of the Armenian policy to gain worldwide recognition of the 1915 massacre of Armenians in the Ottoman Empire as genocide. Turkey added one more precondition in 1993, namely that the conflict in Nagorno-Karabakh should be resolved prior to the normalization of Turkish-Armenian relations. In April 1993, Turkey closed its border with Armenia after the Armenian forces occupied the Kelbajar region, the second of seven occupied Azerbaijani regions surrounding the Armenian-populated enclave. Since then, Turkey has largely reiterated Azerbaijan's demands toward Armenia. Armenia has always said it favoured normalization without any preconditions.

The Protocols seem to imply that Turkey may have decided to abandon two of the three above preconditions, regarding the genocide and Nagorno-Karabakh, for normalizing its relations with Armenia. This is in line with the Turkey's "No problems with neighbors" policy and reflects its efforts to strengthen its role in the South Caucasus after the Georgian-Russian war last August. The protocols were supported by the U.S. (Secretary of State Hillary Clinton

had phone conversations with the leaders of Armenia and Turkey late in August), as well as by the EU and Russia.

IMPLICATIONS: If implemented, these Protocols may result in drastic changes in the regional political pattern. First of all, a more balanced Turkish policy toward Armenia could result in decreasing tension in the region. However, Azerbaijan, which has repeatedly said that it does not exclude new military action in Nagorno-Karabakh, has declared that Turkey's move contradicts its national interests. It is reportedly pressuring Turkish authorities via its lobby in Turkey. Turkey could also potentially benefit from tightening its political and economic ties with the South Caucasus, in particular through the Kars-Gyumri railroad which has been idle since 1993. New regional communication projects involving Armenia are expected to become easier to implement, as Azerbaijan's ability to prevent Armenian participation in these is reduced. Finally, the Turkish-Armenian rapprochement may contribute to pulling Armenia out of the Russian sphere of influence. However, Moscow reacted positively to the Protocols as the opening of the Turkish-Armenian border would ease its access to Armenia, which is now constrained due to its strained relations with Georgia.

Armenia would benefit greatly from a normalization of its relations with Turkey in two respects. First, it will rid itself of its one-sided dependence on communication routes through Georgia, including its only railroad access. Currently, over 70 percent of Armenian cargo traffic goes through Georgia, and the vulnerability of these routes was demonstrated during last year's war. Another benefit to Armenia would be the opening of the Turkish market for Armenian goods. Since 1993, there is

an unofficial embargo on the import of Armenian goods to Turkey, whereas there is no restriction in the opposite direction and Turkish exports to Armenia reached US\$200 million last year.

Opposition to these Protocols is nevertheless strong in both countries. In Turkey, they are viewed as abandoning Turkey's with its "brotherly nation," Azerbaijan. This forces government officials to make conflicting statements about the Protocols and their relations to the issue of Nagorno-Karabakh. The anti-Armenian moods in Turkish society, among state officials and in the "Deep State", create additional obstacles to adopting the Protocols. All of these factors have hindered progress on the issue. The Protocols were reportedly agreed on as early as in April 2009, but their publication became possible only in August, ahead of the expected visit of the Armenian President Serzh Sargsyan to Turkey on October 14 (the next stage of the so-called Football diplomacy).

In Armenia, three main issues of controversy exist. Critics claim that, despite the statements of the Armenian leaders, these Protocols do contain hidden preconditions set by Turkey. First, although they do not mention the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, they still contain the possibility to connect Armenian-Turkish normalization with the conflict through delaying its ratification by the Turkish parliament. Second, the Protocols envisage the formation of a joint "sub-commission on the historical dimension to implement a dialogue with the aim to restore mutual confidence between the two nations". The opposition claims that by this provision, Turkey retains a possibility to revise the 1915 Genocide issue and to prevent other countries from recognizing it. Third, the critics are unhappy with the clause in

the Protocol “confirming the mutual recognition of the existing border between the two countries.” They claim the current de-facto border inherited from the Soviet Union was formed under the Treaty of Kars signed in 1921 between Soviet Armenia and the government of Mustafa Kemal, at a time when neither were legal subjects of international law. Instead, it is claimed, the legal Armenian-Turkish border was established in 1919 by the Arbitrary Award of the U.S president Woodrow Wilson and is located west of the current border. Thus, above all the Dashnaktsutiun nationalist party are campaigning against the government’s signing of the protocols in their current form.

CONCLUSIONS: Armenia and Turkey have launched a bold initiative aimed at establishing normal interstate relations between two nations carrying heavy historical burden of mutual

mistrust. The breakthrough has become possible as Turkey has apparently moved toward changing its previous stance of linking its policy toward Armenia to the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. If the procedure prescribed by the published Protocols is followed, diplomatic relations can be established and the Turkish-Armenian border can be opened in less than half a year. This could create quite a new situation in the region, by influencing the resolution of regional conflicts and implementing joint regional projects. However, strong opposition to the process exists in both countries, providing a significant obstacle to the signing and implementation of the agreements.

AUTHOR’S BIO: Haroutiun Khachatryan is an analyst on political and economic problems in Yerevan, Armenia.



New Book:

The Guns of August 2008

Edited By Svante E. Cornell and S.
Frederick Starr

M.E. Sharpe, New York, June 2009,
290pp

This book is designed to present the facts about the events of August 2008 along with comprehensive coverage of the background to those events. It brings together a wealth of expertise on the South Caucasus and Russian foreign policy, with contributions by Russian, Georgian, European, and American experts on the region.

SHEIKH SAID BURYATSKY AND THE FRESH CULT OF THE SUICIDE BOMBER IN THE NORTH CAUCASUS

Kevin Daniel Leahy

The sudden reappearance of the suicide attack as a tactic of choice for insurgents in the North Caucasus has caused panic among security forces in the region. In attempting to account for this unwelcome trend, Chechnya's president, Ramzan Kadyrov, has blamed the machinations of Western security agencies, as well as the advent of mind-altering psychotropic drugs for misleading young men into carrying out such attacks. Moreover, he has identified Sheikh Said Buryatsky as one of those chiefly responsible for the recent rash of suicide attacks in Chechnya and Ingushetia. Who exactly is this Buryatsky, and what is the true nature of his role within the rebel movement?

BACKGROUND: On August 26, *hunafa.com*, a website affiliated with insurgents based in Ingushetia, reported that Sheikh Said Buryatsky had personally carried out a devastating suicide attack on a police barracks in Nazran a week earlier. An accompanying video depicted Buryatsky in the rear compartment of a 'GAZelle' truck, perched alongside an enormous explosive device that would later be used to kill at least twenty people and injure over one hundred. Since arriving in the North Caucasus last summer to fight on behalf of Doku Umarov's Caucasus Emirate, Buryatsky, a 'well-known' Islamic preacher according to certain sources, has been a regular contributor to various rebel websites. Favoring a somewhat quixotic style of prose, Buryatsky has set about chronicling the deeds of ordinary rebels fighting on behalf of the Emirate. Buryatsky has written a great deal about the lives of individual 'martyrs', with a particular emphasis on suicide bombers, and this is perhaps why Kadyrov has sought to associate him so intimately with the recruitment and training of such operatives.

Speaking in July, the Chechen president accused Buryatsky of recruiting and training Rustam Mukhadiyev, who on July 26 blew himself up on Grozny's Teatralnaya square, killing six people. 'Buryatsky and terrorists like him made a suicide bomber out of a normal man, a young athlete, by drugging and brainwashing him,' Kadyrov declared. A campaign to discredit Buryatsky has been in operation for some time now. Chechen officials have accused Buryatsky of unilaterally issuing a *fatwa* – a binding judgment on a particular subject decreed by a religious dignitary based on this person's interpretation of Islamic law – that would make it incumbent on all Chechen males to participate in the war against Russia. Buryatsky has strongly denied issuing any such *fatwa*. Meanwhile, Kadyrov has recently made a series of calculated references to Buryatsky's ethnic heritage. In July, the Chechen president delightedly informed reporters that Buryatsky's father was a Buddhist and his mother a Christian. 'In a short period of time he has changed his religion three times. What does he know about Islam?' Kadyrov insisted.



Said Buryatsky

When referring to his own role within the ranks of the Caucasus Emirate, Buryatsky has been unfailingly depreciative: 'I am neither an advisor to Doku Umarov nor the Emir of a

group, only a simple mujahid...' It is partly this lack of pretension that makes it so difficult to conceive of Buryatsky as a political-military figure of any sort, let alone the intelligence director of a mass conspiracy of suicide bombers. The news of Buryatsky's 'martyrdom' seemed to confirm that Ramzan Kadyrov was exaggerating the extent of Buryatsky's political-military influence within the insurgency: had Buryatsky been a key political thinker, military strategist or intelligence agent, then his life would hardly have been sacrificed on an errand such as this one. But on September 5, ten days after the truck bomb attack in Nazran, a message accredited to the supposedly 'martyred' Buryatsky was posted on *hunafa.com*. Stating that reports of his demise had been greatly exaggerated, Buryatsky blamed an editorial *faux pas* on the part of the operators of the *hunafa* website for the confusion.

IMPLICATIONS: Reading pieces attributed to Buryatsky posted on various rebel websites, one is struck by the fact that his writings focus almost exclusively on the lives of ordinary rebels. In general, Buryatsky, who goes by the *nom de guerre*, Abu Saad, prefers to avoid subjects of a demonstrably political nature. On matters of substantive political importance, such as the ongoing fraternisation between Akhmed Zakayev and Ramzan Kadyrov, Buryatsky is glad to yield to the editorial agenda outlined by the likes of Movladi Udugov, editor of *kavkazcenter.com*. Buryatsky, like any worthwhile preacher, is a 'people person' and he can be observed on numerous internet videos chatting easily with other young rebels. Ironically, in the course of writing about the lives of individual 'martyrs', such as Beslan

Chagiyev who died in a suicide attack in Grozny in May, Buryatsky invokes the finer qualities of the deceased to extol the virtues of 'martyrdom.'

According to Buryatsky's account, Chagiyev, 31, was an accomplished wrestler who returned to the North Caucasus from abroad to fight on behalf of the Caucasus Emirate. Buryatsky focuses on Chagiyev's human qualities, depicting him as a boon companion, selfless and highly motivated, even describing a good-natured wrestling match between Chagiyev and an enthusiastic young comrade. According to Buryatsky, Chagiyev decided to become a 'martyr,' or *Shakhid*, when he 'learned about the reward for this act and the merit of martyrdom.' Chagiyev's story is representative of a recurring theme in Buryatsky's writings and statements: he is habitually keen to communicate the message that the rebels in the North Caucasus are ordinary young men drawn from different communities across the region. To be sure, the rebels are marked out by their religious devoutness, says Buryatsky, but this does not make them joyless automatons devoid of any *joie de vivre*. The colourful story of Chagiyev and his impromptu wrestling match with a fellow rebel is designed to challenge any such perception. Buryatsky also consistently challenges the conviction, widely held among Russia's Muslims, that the conflagration in the North Caucasus is under the directorship of Russia's secret services, even admitting that he once wondered himself whether Doku Umarov was an FSB *agent provocateur*. One of Buryatsky's central messages is that, fundamentally, Muslims fighting under Umarov's banner are in no way different to Muslims eking out an everyday living in

Moscow, St. Petersburg and other Russian cities. It is unlikely that Ramzan Kadyrov truly believes that Buryatsky is directly responsible for the ongoing campaign of suicide attacks in the North Caucasus. He is, however, genuinely concerned by the activities of Buryatsky, whom he has correctly identified as an effective operator in the relentless information-propaganda war involving his government and the rebel forces at large in the region.

CONCLUSIONS: Kadyrov's preoccupation with Buryatsky stems from the formers' suspicion that the recent spike in suicide attacks in the North Caucasus is at least partially attributable to Buryatsky's efforts, via electronic media, to glorify the act of 'martyrdom.' Buryatsky's value to the leadership of the Caucasus Emirate arises not from the quality of his soldiering or from any military-strategic insight he might provide; rather it stems from his skill as a communicator which, in concert with his youthfulness and charisma, makes him an asset for Movladi Udugov and other doyens of the rebels' information war against the Russian government and its agents in the North Caucasus. For those among the leaders of the Caucasus Emirate who favour the use of suicide bombers as a tactic of expedience in their war against Russia and her allies, Buryatsky has proved a valuable agent: his writings and public pronouncements have undoubtedly helped enable the emergence of a cult of the suicide bomber among young people in Chechnya and Ingushetia.

AUTHOR'S BIO: Kevin Daniel Leahy holds a postgraduate degree from University College Cork, Ireland.

THE METAMORPHOSIS OF COLLECTIVE SECURITY IN CENTRAL ASIA: RUSSIA'S NEW BASE IN SOUTHERN KYRGYZSTAN

Farkhod Tolipov

Since mid-July, rumors and official pronouncements have multiplied regarding the possible deployment of a second Russian military base in Kyrgyzstan. The base would be deployed in the town of Osh in the southern parts of the country, to house forces of the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO). This sudden decision could cause confusion in other CSTO members, especially Central Asian ones, as long as decisions on the base are taken by Russia but portrayed as multilateral. This raises questions concerning whether the decision should be considered a unilateral geopolitical design or collective strategic wisdom.

BACKGROUND: Various discussions about the deployment and functions of military bases since the dissolution of the Soviet Union have demonstrated that the process of geopolitical reordering of this space is dramatic and confusing for the so-called newly independent states, especially those of Central Asia.

Russia's first post-USSR effort at establishing a military presence in Central Asia was the deployment of the 201st Motor Rifle Division and Border Guards in the territory of Tajikistan during the civil war in the early 1990s. In addition, four countries of the Collective Security Treaty (CST) – Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Russia and Uzbekistan – sent battalions to Tajikistan as part of the CST forces. However, before the end of the civil war, the three Central Asian countries decided to withdraw from Tajikistan, leaving Russia with the only “collective security” forces. In the aftermath of the civil war, Tajikistan agreed to the deployment of the Russian 201st Division to a permanent military base in Tajikistan, operating there ever since.

Another major attempt to establish military presence in the region was the 2003 deployment of a Russian air base to Kant airport in

Kyrgyzstan, also still operating. The bases in Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan are portrayed as fighting terrorism, extremism and drug trafficking across Central Asia. However, the forces in Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan have never taken military action against anticipated threats, although terrorism and drug trafficking are serious problems to the Central Asian countries.

Alongside the Russian/CSTO military forces, Western states deployed military contingents in Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan from 2001 on for operations in Afghanistan. The major contingents were the U.S. forces in the Uzbek town of Khanabad (K2) and at the Manas airfield in Kyrgyzstan. K2 operated between 2001 and 2005, when it was closed following a crisis in Uzbek-American relations. Manas was also subjected to controversy earlier this year, when the Kyrgyz authorities decided to close it but later changed its mind.

The German base, deployed in the Uzbek city of Termez in parallel with the American contingent at K2, has kept operating. As relations between Uzbekistan and the U.S. are again improving, U.S. and NATO forces will expand their usage of this base to compensate

for the loss of K2. Moreover, the U.S. and Kyrgyzstan agreed in June that the U.S. air base at Manas would be transformed into a Transit Center fulfilling almost the same functions, with a maintained presence of U.S. forces.

Russia's plan to establish a second base in Kyrgyzstan has obvious strategic geopolitical implications. These implications are strategic since the base is claimed to serve the security interests of Central Asian states. They are also geopolitical, since the decision was obviously taken in the context of a new turn in the geopolitical game between Russia and the U.S. in the region. However, the decision on a second Russian/CSTO base is likely to also hold other undeclared purposes.

IMPLICATIONS: The Central Asian states never officially invited the Russian or CSTO military bases. Rather, these were deployed after secretive bilateral agreements between the recipient and provider of the military contingent. Such decisions have never been

genuinely multilateral and backed by all CSTO members.

Much like the June 14 decision on the CSTO Collective Rapid Reaction Forces, the decision on a second Russian military base in Kyrgyzstan exacerbated the 'collective confusion' within the CSTO. It reflected not only the absence of strong collectivity on such a sensitive issue as the application of military power to defend the national and collective security of member states but also the likelihood of new tension among these if such a decision is adopted. Uzbekistan again demonstrated its reluctance regarding this decision.

There is reason to contemplate what Russia's geopolitical endeavor might entail. A second Russian military base in Kyrgyzstan could certainly have immediate and long-term geopolitical implications.

First, an increased number of bases will add to the militarization of the region, increasing the

emphasis on hard security at the expense of soft security, demonstrating to Central Asian publics that risks of military conflict exists.

Second, since the expanded Russian military presence in Central Asia takes place in a context of geopolitical rivalry between great powers, there is reason to doubt its capability for protecting the weak countries in the region. It seemingly does not envision a role for the forces of Central Asian



(Itar-Tass)

states, especially those of Uzbekistan, in defending their own region.

Third, the Russian base in southern Kyrgyzstan, a region perceived to be prone to extremist actions, could increase Uzbekistan's suspicions of Russian abilities to manage these actions to challenge security and stability in Uzbekistan. A Russian military presence in the Fergana Valley can be interpreted as a warning to Uzbekistan.

Fourth, Uzbekistan's leadership could assess the base as a Kyrgyz demarche against Uzbekistan, thereby risking increased tensions between the two states. Russia would benefit from such a situation because this would simultaneously challenge the interests of Uzbekistan and the U.S.

Fifth, a new base in Kyrgyzstan would contradict Washington's current drive to "reset" its relations with Moscow. It would also contradict the previously renewed strategic cooperation, agreed during former U.S. president George W. Bush's visit to Moscow in May 2002.

Sixth, if the Russian decision to open a second base in Central Asia is underpinned by geopolitics rather than security, its strategy risks backfiring. The base deployment will discredit Russia for its lack of collectivity and unilateralism, although it is declared to be an element of the CSTO. For the time being, there is no visible U.S. challenge to Russia's interests in Central Asia as to warrant emergency measures on Moscow's part in the form of deployed military forces.

Seventh, it is hard to see how the new base could accomplish the task for which it is

expected to operate – fighting terrorism, extremism and drug trafficking. Indeed, throughout their period of independence, all Central Asian countries have been able to cope with such threats on their own or by intra-regional cooperation. The scale of existing threats has not so far stipulated any major multilateral military actions. In the short and mid-term perspectives, the scale of such threats is unlikely to increase as long as their sources are fought by ISAF and OEF forces.

CONCLUSIONS: The second Russian base, even under the aegis of the CSTO, will for all practical purposes constitute a means for projecting Russian military and strategic power in its 'near abroad'. From a security point of view, it will neither be needed, nor useful, in fulfilling the purposes for which it is officially intended. However, from a geopolitical point of view, Russia seems intent to preclude the consolidation of a long-term U.S. military presence in Central Asia. The price of such undertakings could well be Central Asia's independence and unity.

There is no doubt that Central Asia, and perhaps the entire post-Soviet space, need some mechanism or format for collective security. The establishment of the second Russian military base, however, will hardly solve this task. It cannot provide an effective mechanism of this kind, because it is not a product of a collective will and reflects immanent friction in bringing the regional collective security system into existence.

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FIELD REPORTS

NEW STUDY PROVIDES EVIDENCE OF RUSSIAN PLANNING OF WARTIME CYBER-ATTACK ON GEORGIA

Niklas Nilsson

Simultaneously with the Russian invasion of Georgia on August 7, 2008, a large-scale cyber attack was launched on the country's IT infrastructure – shutting down or disturbing most crucial government websites, along with those of major banks, business organizations, educational institutions, and media sites. The attack successfully disrupted the informational capabilities of the Georgian government and prevented it from channelling its version of events domestically, as well as internationally.

While the attack is generally assumed to have been part of the overall Russian war effort – thus more or less directly instigated by the Russian military, the actual design of the attack has remained unclear. The recently released report “Overview by the US-CCU of the Cyber Campaign Against Georgia in August of 2008” by the U.S. Cyber Consequences Unit, an independent, non-profit organization affiliated with the Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy, helps clear some of the fog surrounding the cyber-attack.

The report concludes that the attacks were carried out by civilians without affiliation to the Russian military or authorities, recruited, coordinated, and supplied with software through Internet social forums. The attackers mostly comprised of residents of Russia, but came to include participants around the world, most prominently from Ukraine and Lithuania. All except one of the forums coordinating the attacks were in Russian. However, the report states that many of the attacks were so tightly coordinated with the Russian military operations that its organizers must have been

cooperating with the Russian military, receiving information on the timing of operations. The speed with which the attacks were implemented also suggests that significant preparation, such as reconnaissance for Internet vulnerabilities, production of software, and writing of attack scripts must have been carried out beforehand. Certain material specifically designed for use against Georgia had verifiably been produced as long as two years ahead, indicating that Russian cyber-warfare against Georgia had been on the table for some time.

The report also suggests that the cyber-attacks were supported by Russian organized crime. Several of the servers and addresses utilized for coordinating the attacks were associated with Russian criminal organizations, as were the botnets employed.

According to the report, a coordinated attack of botnets, which had previously utilized for criminal activities, marked the start of the cyber war. The attack was then expanded by a mass recruitment of civilian attackers through postings on websites, providing both the tools for conducting cyber attacks and a list of proposed targets. These were by design so easy to use that very little technical knowledge was required on the part of individual participants.

The immediate targets of the attacks were the most crucial government and media websites. The list of targets was then expanded to include more government and media sites (including BBC and CNN), as well as those of financial institutions, business associations, and educational institutions. The attacks disturbed several channels of

communication, including emails, landline phone calls and mobile phone traffic. This had the effect of disrupting Georgian government coordination and communication with the general public, restricting public communication and access to information, and disturbing financial transactions.

Georgia sought to respond to the cyber attacks through requesting assistance from Estonia, which had been subjected to a similar attack during the 'statue crisis' the previous year. Attempts to alleviate the effects included the unsuccessful instalment of filters, and later shifting the hosting of websites to servers in Estonia and the U.S., which proved more efficient. Georgia also launched a counter cyber-attack against Russian websites, reportedly with little effect.

The report's main conclusion is that the objective of the cyber attacks was to support the Russian invasion of Georgia, and that it was tightly coordinated with Russian action on the ground. The attacks started and ended in very close coordination

with the military campaign. Almost all targets were such that attacking them would produce military advantages from a Russian point of view. News media and communications facilities, which would otherwise have been likely targets for physical attacks, were left unharmed, since they were already inoperable due to cyber-attacks.

The US-CCU report provides a convincing account of the cyber-war as part of overall Russian military tactics. Even though no concrete evidence is produced of direct communication between the Russian military and the organizers of the cyber attack, the circumstances and timing of these attacks suggest that such coordination must have existed. The fact that the attacks, launched immediately upon the Russian invasion, would have needed long preparation makes convincing the assertion that they were indeed an important component of a pre-planned Russian invasion of its neighbor.

INDIA'S INTENSIFIED INTEREST IN TAJIKISTAN DRIVEN BY PURSUIT OF AIRBASE AND URANIUM

Alexander Sodiqov

Indian President Pratibha Patil's three-day visit to Tajikistan, ending on September 9, was largely ignored by international media. Arriving in Dushanbe at the second part of a two-nation tour of Russia and Tajikistan, Patil said India was interested in developing broader cooperation with Tajikistan to ensure regional, energy, and food security. In a rare honor, she was the only foreign leader attending celebrations of Tajikistan's Independence Day on September 9. Although Patil's tour of Tajikistan did not make international headlines, many in Dushanbe viewed the visit as heralding a new era of India's engagement in the country.

India has recently sought to consolidate its close historical ties with Tajikistan in order to

counterbalance China's rising influence in Central Asia and to maintain a strategic relevance to the region regarded as part of its 'extended neighborhood'. More importantly, New Delhi views Dushanbe as a crucial partner in preventing a resurgence of the Taliban in Afghanistan, and limiting the export of Islamist ideologies in the region. Tajikistan has been India's main point of entry into Afghanistan since the late 1990s. Both Dushanbe and New Delhi supported the Northern Alliance forces which battled against the Taliban regime in Afghanistan. Until 2002, India maintained a medical facility at Farkhor, on Tajikistan's southern border with Afghanistan, where injured Northern Alliance fighters were treated. It was mainly through Farkhor that India channeled its

assistance to the Northern Alliance in the form of warfare equipment, intelligence and spare parts for Soviet-made attack helicopters.

According to Tajik foreign policy analyst Rashid Gani Abdullo, after the fall of the Taliban regime India was determined to maintain a point of access to Afghanistan. Since 2002 India has invested more than US\$20 million in the reconstruction of the Soviet-era airbase at Ayni, roughly 15 kilometers outside Tajikistan's capital Dushanbe. The airbase attracted international attention in 2006 when the news spread that New Delhi was negotiating to deploy 12 military jets at Ayni, thus turning it into India's first military base beyond its borders. Both Dushanbe and New Delhi have since denied that India sought an airbase at Ayni, with Tajik President Emomali Rakhmon announcing that Tajikistan would not host any foreign bases other than Russia's on its territory.

Abdullo argues, however, that India never abandoned its ambition to set up a base in Tajikistan. According to the analyst, New Delhi needs the base at Ayni in order to improve its response capability to potential crises in Afghanistan and Pakistan, and to be able to project power in energy-rich Central Asia. Most analyses link Dushanbe's refusal to host an Indian military base to a strong opposition from Russia. Hence, as Dushanbe's foreign policy latitude vis-à-vis Moscow appears to be rapidly growing, the likelihood of New Delhi acquiring an outpost in Central Asia increases.

Other experts argue that India's intensified interest in Tajikistan is part of New Delhi's "uranium diplomacy". Already the world's sixth largest energy consumer, India needs to continually increase its energy supply in order to sustain economic growth. New Delhi aims to more than double its nuclear power capacity by 2012, which currently accounts for roughly three percent of India's energy supply. India recently obtained permission from the Nuclear Suppliers Group (NSG), the 46-member body controlling global atomic commerce, to buy nuclear fuel and reactors

for civilian use. New Delhi has already signed uranium import pacts with Russia and France, and is looking for additional sources of nuclear fuel.

It is not clear whether Tajikistan has economically viable uranium reserves to offer to India. It was previously believed that Tajikistan depleted its uranium ore deposits while supplying the Soviet defense industry. The status of Tajik uranium ore reserves was classified during the Soviet period. However, in an annual address to the parliament in April 2008, President Rakhmon said Tajikistan contains 14 percent of the world's uranium reserves. Later that year, the parliament amended national legislation, allowing foreign companies to extract uranium ore in the country. There have been subsequent reports of Russian and Chinese companies intending to mine uranium in Tajikistan. New Delhi could outpace Moscow and Beijing in gaining access to Tajik uranium by acting faster and paying more.

The recent Chinese expansion in Tajikistan coinciding with declining Russian influence has signaled the rising importance of economics in Dushanbe's relations with regional powers. New Delhi has been slow in appreciating such dynamics. Trade turnover between India and Tajikistan in 2008 was only US\$57 million, according to official statistics, and its aid and assistance to Dushanbe is estimated at US\$20-25 million. Indian companies have invested US\$ 17 million in the reconstruction of the Varzob-1 hydroelectric power station, which supplies part of Dushanbe with electricity, and US\$5 million in the construction of a five-star hotel in the Tajik capital. Following the Indian president's visit, it was announced that Indian companies plan to invest US\$16 million in the construction of a cement plant in northern Tajikistan and US\$12 million in the development of gas fields in the country's south. In order for New Delhi to gain access to the airbase at Ayni and to Tajik uranium reserves, it would need to go beyond its already strong collaboration with Dushanbe in defense and education, and focus more on the economic dimension of cooperation.

SHOOTINGS IN TASHKENT – AN ANTI-TERRORIST OPERATION?

Erkin Akhmadov

On August 29, shots rang out in a residential house near the Quqcha mosque in the old part of Uzbekistan's capital. The shooting was between supposed terrorists and state security and defense forces. On September 3, the media service of the Prosecutor General of Uzbekistan posted a message with details of the clash. It stated that as a result of the operation, three members of a terrorist group, including their leader Shavkat Mahmudov, were eliminated. The group supposedly had completed training abroad with foreign terrorist organizations. Moreover, it was stated that the group was suspected of several crimes committed in Tashkent lately. Even though a shooting in the capital is not an ordinary incident, it still did not receive wide coverage by the local mass media. Thus, several speculations are circulating in local media attempting to shed light on what happened in Tashkent.

The official version of what happened on August 29 states that Uzbek security and defense forces conducted a special operation to eliminate armed gunmen. Two armed men were detected in an apartment in a two-floor building in a residential area. In order to avoid bloodshed they were offered to surrender, however they resisted security agents and attempted to break through the cordon. During the exchange of fire, the gunmen were eliminated. Furthermore, an unknown number of militants were detained during the same operation and later reportedly confessed they had trained abroad.

Some of the most ambiguous aspects of the incident include the exact amount of those killed and injured in the course of the shootings; the origin and the group affiliations of the gunmen; and the crimes that the gunmen supposedly had committed in Tashkent.

It is still unclear how many people were killed in the incident. In the first reports of the incident, the

elimination of only two terrorists was mentioned. Later, however, three terrorists appeared to have been shot. Besides the two gunmen, an elderly woman in whose apartment the gunmen were found was accidentally injured. She died without receiving any medical assistance. Since the woman's relationship to the gunmen remains to be established, for now the official version suggests that two terrorists were shot dead near the house where the operation took place and the third one committed suicide by jumping from the bridge on "Druzhba Narodov" street. The statement of the Prosecutor General provides no information about casualties among the policemen and members of the security and defense forces. Tashkent human rights activist Surat Ikramov suggests, however, that two or four policemen with bullet wounds were delivered to the First City Hospital located nearby. Radio Liberty sources on site reported that three injured policemen were delivered to the Hospital on that day.

Very little is known about the origin and affiliations of the terrorists. According to residents of the area where the shootings took place, these people did not reside in their mahalla, and were natives of Qashqadariyo region. Other unofficial sources suggest that the two gunmen were a father and a son, as one of them was older and another younger. Even though the official statement of the Prosecutor General suggests that the gunmen were terrorists and had been trained abroad, there is still no further information or details concerning their affiliation to terrorist organizations.

An additional aspect of the incident that still begs further detail concerns the crimes for which the gunmen are suspected. The official statement of the Prosecutor General stated that the group committed a range of assassinations and attempted murders on citizens of Uzbekistan. Based on this statement, it is possible to speculate on the suspected murders. In



gunmen are suspected for any of these crimes, or if there are others unknown to the wider public.

As reported by the Prosecutor General, the other members of the group are currently captured and being interrogated. Perhaps in the course of these procedures more will be revealed about the incident and everyone involved. For now, however, the shootings in Tashkent manifest yet another

fact, several crimes had been committed in the capital lately. For instance, in July Abror Abrorov, an assistant at the Kukeldash mosque, was murdered; on July 31, a knife attack on Anvar-qori Tursunov, the chief Imam at the same Mosque, took place; and on August 9, Hasan Asadov, an Interior Ministry anti-terrorism and anti-corruption officer, was shot. Again, it is not clear whether the

demonstration of the power and military equipment of Uzbekistan's law enforcement bodies. In light of the persistent information vacuum, and especially in cases like the present one, the belief that the state is trying to create an illusion of a terrorist threat is pervasive.

TAJIKISTAN-UZBEKISTAN: WIN-WIN DEALS?

Suhrob Majidov

In September, Tajikistan's government announced the details of its agreement with Uzbekistan on the import of electricity. In accordance with the Agreement between Tajikistan and Uzbekistan, Dushanbe exports electricity to Tashkent at a price that is lower than that of internal market, i.e. the price of electricity for citizens of Tajikistan. Nevertheless, state authorities claim that it is a profitable deal.

According to Tajik authorities, Uzbekistan imports Tajik electricity at the price of US\$1.5 cents per kilowatt. According to the agreement between the states, Uzbekistan will receive 550 million kilowatt

at the aforementioned price. However, after the latest price increase, the Tajik population pays more for electricity than Uzbekistan: US\$1.6 cents per kilowatt. Moreover, Tajik authorities claim that US\$1.5 cents is only the net value of the electricity without value added tax and expenses for transit of electricity from Tajikistan to Uzbekistan.

Nevertheless, Tajik authorities argue that it is more profitable for Tajikistan to deliver electricity at such a low price than to waste water from the reservoirs during the summer time for nothing. Representatives of the Ministry of Energy and Industry of Tajikistan explain that the daily

production of electricity in Tajikistan during this season amounts to 75 million kilowatts, while the internal daily consumption is only 30-40 million kilowatts. This implies large scale waste of water from the Nurek reservoir (the largest hydrostation in Tajikistan), which is full to the brims this year.

On the one hand, the arguments of the Tajik authorities seem quite plausible: it is better to have less than nothing. Furthermore, the attempts of Tajik authorities to assert themselves on foreign markets seem economically reasonable in conditions of severe market competition. For instance, Tajikistan was selling the same volume of electricity to Afghanistan during the winter during a severe internal energy crisis “not to lose foreign markets”. Tajik Member of Parliament Shodi Shabdolov, representing the Communist Party, supports the authorities’ arguments: “We should take into consideration that Tajikistan is selling summer surplus of its electricity. We cannot save the electricity from hydro stations ‘until better times’”. Nevertheless, according to him, Uzbekistan should in turn offer the same price for electricity export to Tajikistan during winter. In practice, Tashkent sells electricity to Dushanbe at a price which is several times higher during winter.

On the other hand, some experts claim that against the background of increased electricity prices for the population of Tajikistan, which are according to authorities still “the cheapest in the world” and which “demand a price increase in order to make the energy sector attractive for investors”, selling electricity to Uzbekistan at US\$1.5 cents seems shocking. According to expert Shokirjon Khakimov, “selling electricity to Uzbekistan cheaper than to their own population contradicts the national interests of Tajikistan”. Bahodur Khabibov, head of the Consumer Union, claims that the population of

Tajikistan will never accept “selling electricity for a song” to another country regardless of any economic or political reasons.

Apart from economic motivations, there are also political aspects to the deal. This agreement on electricity sale can help resolving the contradictions in the complex bilateral relationships between two countries. For instance, both sides lately decided to resume the work of their intergovernmental commission after a break of seven years. Mirzosharif Islomiddinov, head of the Tajik Parliament Committee on energy and industry, thinks that “this agreement contributes to the normalization of the relationships between the two states, particularly in water and energy.” The Tajik MP expressed hope that Uzbek authorities will take this agreement into consideration during winter time, when they will decide about the price for electricity imported by Tajikistan.

All in all, the Tajik authorities’ argument of “better less than nothing” appears justified economically and politically. However, many experts claim that such a ‘deal’ is humiliating for the Tajik people who pay more than their neighbor for their own electricity. The first counterplea for the ‘deal’ is that if the Tajik government sells the electricity to Uzbekistan at “summer prices” taking into consideration the seasonal water surplus, then the Tajik population should also have “winter” and “summer” prices on electricity. According to some experts, the introduction of seasonal tariffs in Tajikistan would provide a better understanding and acceptance of the negotiations processes between Tajikistan and Uzbekistan in the energy sphere. Second, Uzbekistan’s price for electricity imported by Tajikistan during winter should be adequate, or at least take into consideration the low price of Tajik electricity during summer.

NEWS DIGEST

UZBEKISTAN TO TAKE PART IN SCO EXERCISES AS OBSERVER

3 September

The Senate of Parliament of Uzbekistan on Saturday passed the law on ratification of the agreement on the order of organization and carrying out of joint antiterrorist exercises of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) member states in Dushanbe on August 28, 2008, the agency reports citing News Agency REGNUM. "The document is directed at strengthening of cooperation of the SCO member countries in struggle against terrorism and extremism and defines the order of participation of the parties for the exercises." "During the ceremony of signing of the agreement, the Uzbek party informed that Uzbekistan will take part in the joint antiterrorist exercises of the SCO member countries as an observer," a source in the government of Uzbekistan informed. According to the local experts, this decision has been made according to the legislation of Uzbekistan that states that the country does not send its military contingents to the territories of other states. (Kazakhstan Today)

HUGO CHAVEZ ARRIVED FOR FIRST OFFICIAL VISIT IN TURKMENISTAN

7 September

The President of Venezuela, Ugo Chavez, arrived for the first official visit in Turkmenistan on September 6, the agency reports citing NEWSru. He was met at the International airport of Ashkhabad by Vice Prime Minister of Turkmenistan, Baymurad Hodzhamammedov. According to ITAR-TASS, the visit in Ashkhabad of the head of Venezuela is considered as the beginning of constructive interstate dialogue and the act of mutual desire and readiness of two friendly countries for development of multilateral cooperation. The official meeting of the Presidents of Turkmenistan, Gurbanguly Berdymuhammedov, and Venezuela, Hugo Chavez, is planned for Monday, September 7, the press service of the Turkmen government informed. "The leaders of the states are expected to discuss a number of questions and will designate priorities of the long-term

mutually beneficial partnership having big prospects taking into account the economic potential of two countries." (Kazakhstan Today)

TURKISH FM VISITS GEORGIA, DISCUSSES TURKISH CAPTAIN'S RELEASE

7 September

Final decision on detained Turkish captain of a cargo vessel seized by the Georgian coast guard last month, will be made on September 8 after visiting Turkish Foreign Minister Ahmet Davutoglu meets with President Saakashvili, Georgian Foreign Minister, Grigol Vashadze, said. "I and my colleague discussed this issue and I think we have found the solution, which would satisfy everyone. We will be ready to give more details after [the Turkish Foreign Minister] meets with the Georgian President," Vashadze said at a joint news conference with his Turkish counterpart in Tbilisi. "We have very useful conversation on the matter and it will be also discussed when I meet with President Saakashvili tomorrow," Foreign Minister Davutoglu said. He also said that the two countries should cooperate to prevent reoccurrence of similar situation. The Turkish Foreign Minister pays official visit to Georgia on September 7-8. Before arriving in Tbilisi, Davutoglu said, according to the Reuters report, that Georgia agreed to release the captain of the Turkish vessel in exchange of USD 18,000 fine. The Georgian court found the captain, Mehmet Coskun Öztürk, guilty of smuggling and unauthorized economic activity in breakaway Abkhazia and sentenced him to 24 years in prison. Other 16 crew members of the vessel, which was denied while transporting fuel to Abkhazia, were fined and released. Twelve of them are Turkish citizens and four from Azerbaijan. (Civil Georgia)

GEORGIA RELEASES JAILED TURKISH CAPTAIN

8 September

A captain of a Turkish-operated cargo vessel, seized last month after trying to deliver fuel to breakaway Abkhazia, was released, the Georgian court said on September 8. The Supreme Court said that Turkish

citizen, Mehmet Coskun Öztürk was released after he pled guilty that was followed by plea bargaining. As a result, the captain was given a three-year conditional sentence, plus GEL 30,000 fine (about USD 17,500). The move comes hours after visiting Turkish Foreign Minister, Ahmet Davutoglu, met with President Saakashvili on September 8. "As far as I know at a meeting the President [Saakashvili] has decided that the captain will be released," Vashadze told Civil.Ge in brief remarks when asked about the matter earlier on September 8. The Georgian court found Öztürk, guilty of smuggling and violation of Georgia's law on occupied territories, banning economic activity in breakaway Abkhazia without Georgia's consent, and sentenced him to 24 years in prison on August 31. (Civil Georgia)

OSCE WELCOMES UZBEK PROGRESS ON HUMAN RIGHTS

9 September

A European human rights watchdog has praised Uzbekistan's progress in human rights and said it would step up cooperation with the Central Asian state, long criticized for rights abuses. Rights groups say the former Soviet republic bordering Afghanistan has jailed thousands of dissidents and political foes of President Islam Karimov, a charge the government denies. But this year Tashkent has taken several steps to mend its strained ties with the West, raising hopes for dialogue on human rights and democracy. Janez Lenarcic, the Director of the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR), part of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), visited Tashkent on September 8 and met Uzbek Foreign Minister Vladimir Norov and other officials, the OSCE said. "We are encouraged by the progress made recently in implementing some of the commitments Uzbekistan has adopted as a participating State of the OSCE, including efforts to improve detention conditions, the release of some human rights defenders, and the abolition of the death penalty," it quoted Lenarcic as saying. "Our talks here have shown clearly that there is a willingness on both sides to work together more closely in the future to strengthen Uzbekistan's compliance with its international commitments." Lenarcic said the OSCE was ready to send a mission to assess requirements in Tashkent in the near future "to determine the format of a possible ODIHR involvement" in observing parliamentary elections in Uzbekistan scheduled for December.

Uzbek officials could not be reached for comment. Uzbekistan expelled a U.S. air base and severed nearly all contacts with the West in 2005 following strong criticism over its handling of a riot in the town of Andijon where, according to witnesses, government troops killed hundreds of protesters. But it allowed the transit of nonmilitary supplies for U.S. troops in Afghanistan this year, praised U.S. President Barack Obama's address to Muslims and intensified diplomatic contacts with Western nations. (Reuters)

HUGE FINE FOR KAZAKH WEEKLY OVER BANK STORY

9 September

The Medeu district court in Almaty has ruled that Kazakhstan's "Respublika" weekly should pay a huge fine to BTA Bank, RFE/RL's Kazakh Service reports. The court ordered the newspaper to print an apology to the bank and pay 60 million tenges (almost \$400,000) to BTA as "compensation for moral damage." The court ruled that a story run by "Respublika" caused a run on deposits that lost the bank 6.8 billion tenges (\$45 million) in deposits, lawyer Sergei Utkin told Reuters. Utkin said "Respublika" was unable to pay the money and would challenge the ruling. Directors of the BTA Bank filed the lawsuit against the weekly, accusing it of giving "false information about the bank's activities" in the article printed on March 6. The newspaper's deputy editor in chief, Oksana Makushina, says the case is politically motivated, and that the verdict will mean the newspaper's closure. Last month, the newspaper's editors told journalists that they could move their operation to the Internet if they lost the case. Earlier this summer, the opposition newspaper "Taszharghan" (The Stonebreaker) had to stop publication after it lost a similar libel case. (RFE/RL)

BAKU CONSIDERS OPENING ARMENIAN BORDER

9 September

Azerbaijan might open its border with Armenia in exchange for the handover of five disputed regions near the territory of Nagorno-Karabakh, officials say. Elkhan Polukhov, a spokesman for the Azeri Ministry of Foreign Affairs, told Turkish daily Today's Zaman that opening the border was a matter for consideration. "It has been said in earlier statements from Azerbaijani officials that Azerbaijan is ready to open borders and restore dialogue with Armenia if the first stage of a plan to

resolve the conflict is implemented," he said. The spokesman said those early provisions on restoring bilateral relations with Armenia included the return of five regions near the disputed Nagorno-Karabakh territory and the return of internally displaced persons. Turkey closed its border with Armenia in 1993 in support of Azerbaijan, which was engaged in a military conflict over the disputed territory. Yerevan claims ethnic Armenians are deprived of their basic rights in the territory, while Baku argues those solutions lie in annexing Nagorno-Karabakh. Ankara said it would open its borders with Armenia in time for a World Cup qualifying match in October. Polukhov said it was too early to make any formal announcements on border plans. (UPI)

RALLY TO EXPRESS SUPPORT FOR JAILED RIGHTS ADVOCATE

10 September

A rally has been held in Almaty in support of Kazakhstan's leading human rights activist, who was recently jailed, RFE/RL's Kazakh Service reports. Last week, Yevgenyy Zhovtis, the director of the Kazakh nongovernmental organization Bureau on Human Rights, was sentenced to four years in jail for his role in a fatal traffic accident. Kazakh rights activist Viktor Kovtunovsky appeared on Almaty's central square and unfolded a sign saying, "Today -- Zhovtis, Tomorrow -- You!" A representative of the Almaty City Prosecutor's Office told Kovtunovsky that his protest was violating Kazakh laws on public gatherings. Kovtunovsky continued his action. Several other activists then joined Kovtunovsky in his picket. International human rights groups say the case against Zhovtis was an effort to silence him for his professional activities. Zhovtis had made a presentation to the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) in Vienna that was critical of the human rights situation in Kazakhstan shortly before the traffic accident. (RFE/RL)

CHECHNYA FAILS TO UPROOT CAUSES OF TERRORISM, WATCHDOG SAYS

10 September

Chechnya's pro-Russian government must solve the murder of human rights worker Natalya Estemirova, engage with non-governmental organizations and ensure counter-terrorism operations don't harm civilians, Council of Europe Human Rights Commissioner Thomas Hammarberg said. Chechnya, with neighbors Ingushetia and Dagestan, has been swept by a wave

of terrorist attacks this summer. At the same time, human rights activists critical of the authorities have been murdered, including Estemirova, a colleague of slain journalist Anna Politkovskaya. "It's essential to address the lack of discipline within the security forces," Hammarberg told reporters in Moscow today after a fact-finding mission to the North Caucasus region. "Indiscriminate actions by the security forces do create bitterness among the population and worsen the situation." Hammarberg, on his fourth such mission in as many years, met government officials including Chechen leader Ramzan Kadyrov and Ingush President Yusus-Bek Yevkurov, a survivor of a June suicide bombing. The Council of Europe, which monitors and rules on human rights abuses in its 47 member states, will issue a report on the North Caucasus later this year. Estemirova's unsolved July murder had a chilling effect on the work of other human rights workers in Chechnya, Hammarberg said. Local authorities should enter a dialog with non-governmental organizations instead of criticizing them, he said. Graves containing the remains of more than 3,000 missing persons should be opened and the bodies identified, he said. "I'm not sure it's understood in Moscow how deeply sensitive this issue is in Chechen society," Hammarberg said. "Very many families are affected and it has created very deep bitterness." Hammarberg said he saw "positive signs" in neighboring Ingushetia, where Yevkurov has engaged human rights groups and recognized the socio-economical roots of extremist activity. "His approach to non-governmental organizations is a model," Hammarberg said about Yevkurov, who has returned to work after an attempt on his life. Operations aimed at rooting out terrorists must not harm innocent bystanders, Hammarberg said. "I hope the start of that approach in Ingushetia will continue and also be a model for Chechnya," he said. (Bloomberg)

ARMENIAN SOLDIERS KILLED IN AZERBAIJAN

11 September

Five Armenian soldiers have been killed in Azerbaijan's Nagorno Karabakh region in an apparent cease-fire violation, Azeri media reported. The BBC said Friday while three Azeri news agencies reported deadly fighting in the disputed region, the conflict and reported Armenian deaths had not been confirmed by Azerbaijan. Azerbaijan and Armenia remained divided over control of the

Nagorno Karabakh region of the South Caucasus since fighting over the region erupted in the 1990s. Since that violence ended in 1994 with a cease-fire, the region has been the site of multiple shootings. An anonymous official confirmed to the BBC that gunfire had occurred in the region resulting in casualties. Specifics regarding the violence were not reported. Meanwhile, Karabakh Defence Ministry spokesman Senor Hasratian denied the Azeri news reports of fatalities, but did confirm gunfire took place in the region overnight. The BBC said negotiations for a solidified cease-fire agreement between Armenia and Azerbaijan are ongoing. (UPI)

ATTACKS KILL DOZENS AS AFGHANS AWAIT THE VOTE

12 September

Roadside bombs killed 20 civilians in southern Afghanistan and fighters killed 11 policemen and six private guards in attacks, officials said as the country awaited results from last month's disputed election. Violence in Afghanistan has reached its worst levels of the eight-year-old war despite record levels of U.S. and NATO troops being sent to fight the Taliban. The country remains mired in a drawn-out dispute over election fraud that could test the patience of U.S. President Barack Obama and other Western leaders contemplating whether more troops are needed to defend its government. Election authorities were due to give near-complete preliminary results from the August 20 presidential election later in the day, although a final outcome will still await the results of a fraud investigation that could take months. Results so far show incumbent Hamid Karzai headed for a single round victory, which could be challenged by a UN-backed watchdog that says it has found proof of fraud and has begun voiding ballots from areas where Karzai won overwhelming support. In the worst incident reported on September 12, the Interior Ministry said a roadside bomb in Oruzgan Province in the south had struck two passenger cars, killing 14 civilians. Provincial police chief Juma Gul Hemat put the death toll at 12. He said: "The Taliban obviously planted the roadside bomb to target Afghan and foreign troops, but unfortunately it struck civilians." Another roadside bomb in Kandahar province killed six civilians, the Interior Ministry and provincial governor said. In Konduz Province in the north, fighters attacked a police post, killing seven policemen including the commander at the checkpoint in a battle that ran from the middle of

the night into morning, provincial governor Mohammad Omar said. He said two other policemen were missing and feared captured by the fighters. Fighters killed four policemen in an attack on a patrol in Nangarhar Province in the east of the country on September 12, provincial government spokesman Ahmad Zia Abdulzai said. Six guards from a local security firm were killed when fighters attacked their office in eastern Kunar Province, provincial Governor Fazlullah Wahidi said. (Reuters)

SUICIDE BLAST HITS POLICE IN CHECHNYA

12 September

An emergency official says a suicide bomber has wounded three police officers in the capital of Russia's war-scarred Chechnya province. Southern Russia Emergency Situations Ministry spokesman Marat Prokopenkov said Saturday that the bomber set off his explosives close to a police patrol near a school in Grozny. He said three officers were hospitalized, two of whom were severely wounded. Police at the scene initially said it appeared three police were killed. Separately, the Interior Ministry in neighboring Dagestan province said security forces besieged a home and killed four alleged militants Saturday. Chechnya and nearby provinces in southern Russia's restive, heavily Muslim Caucasus region have experienced an upsurge in violence in recent months. (AP)

AKTAU SUMMIT IS IMPORTANT IN TERM OF FUTURE COOPERATION OF CASPIAN COUNTRIES: AZERBAIJANI MPS

12 September

The Aktau meeting of the Presidents of Azerbaijan, Russia, Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan is of great importance in terms of future cooperation of the Caspian countries, believe the members of the Azerbaijani Parliament. "The Aktau meeting of the Presidents of Azerbaijan, Russia, Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan is important for the future cooperation between the Caspian countries," Member of the Political Council of the ruling New Azerbaijan Party (NAP) and Azerbaijani Parliamentarian, Aydin Mirzazade said. On Sept. 11, Aktau hosted an informal meeting amongst the Presidents of Azerbaijan, Russia, Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan. During the meeting the heads of state discussed bilateral and multilateral cooperation. Mirzazade said at the summit, mainly, focused on the future cooperation of the Caspian

littoral countries of the CIS. "The discussions include joint projects, and the development of relations in the trade and economic spheres. The Presidents said the meeting did not discuss the issue, regarding the status of the Caspian Sea. Perhaps, this will be the topic of discussion at meetings to be held with the participation of all littoral states. Azerbaijan, Russia and Kazakhstan have come to a common decision on the status of the Caspian Sea and signed this contract. By taking this step, the states set an example to other countries," said the parliamentarian. The Presidents' meeting will enable to reach a consensus on outstanding issues, Parliamentarian, Zahid Oruj said to Trend News. "The current problem regarding the sharing of the Caspian Sea has represented a kind of risk for the region. This meeting shows that the Caspian states are seeking ways to solve this problem. I believe that the adoption of the model, chosen by Azerbaijan in the Caspian Sea, is very important for peace and security of the Caspian Sea. Without Azerbaijan's policy, the Caspian could become the second of the Nagorno-Karabakh problem," he said. (Trend News)

UZBEKISTAN TO AUCTION 150 MINERAL RESOURCE DEPOSITS

13 September

Uzbekistan will auction more than 150 mineral-resource deposits to attract foreign investment to the central Asian state, RIA Novosti reported. The deposits contain minerals such as wolfram, lithium and strontium, the state news agency said, citing an unidentified spokesman at Uzbekistan's state committee on geology and mineral resources. Uzbekistan will also auction ore and chemical deposits and those with construction materials, according to RIA Novosti. (Bloomberg)

DRUG ABUSE CLINIC FIRE KILLS 38 PEOPLE IN SOUTH KAZAKHSTAN

13 September

At least 38 people were killed in a fire that broke out in a drug abuse clinic in southern Kazakhstan, the Central Asian republic's emergencies ministry said on Sunday. The fire started early on Sunday at the narcological dispensary in the town of Taldykorgan, the administrative center of the Almaty province. The blaze engulfed an area of 650 square meters, the ministry said. "According to preliminary data, 38 died at the scene of the fire while 40 people were evacuated," the ministry said. The fire was localized an hour after it broke out, the

ministry said. Kazakh Prime Minister Karim Masimov has ordered to establish a special commission to investigate the causes of the fire. (RIA Novosti)

HIJAB BAN PROMPTS CONCERN FROM PARENTS IN TAJIK PROVINCE

14 September

At the suggestion of Tajikistan's Islamic Renaissance Party, education officials are meeting with parents to discuss a ban on the wearing of the hijab, or Islamic headscarf, in schools in northwest Sughd Province, RFE/RL's Tajik Service reports. Saidmukhtor Jalolov of the Education Ministry recently introduced a new school uniform that allows national scarves but forbids students from wearing the hijab. Officials told RFE/RL on September 11 that the Education Ministry has received 10 complaints from parents who want their daughters to have their head covered while attending school. High school student Nilufar Zohidova said she kept wearing her veil to school despite the ban and was expelled after four days. Tajik newspapers last week quoted anonymous education officials who said that the rule against the hijab will also soon be enforced on teachers. Several university students were expelled from school last year as well. (RFE/RL)

KYRGYZ-UZBEK BORDER REMAINS CLOSED

14 September

Officials in Uzbekistan continue to keep the Kyrgyz-Uzbek border closed, RFE/RL's Kyrgyz Service reports. Akylbek Nyshanov, the deputy chairman of the border guard service in southern Kyrgyzstan, told RFE/RL that Uzbekistan explains the current closure of the border by saying that there is foot-and-mouth disease in the region, which affects various kinds of livestock. It is not clear when the border checkpoints will reopen. At the end of August, Uzbekistan officially closed its border with its neighbors until September 10, explaining the action by citing the celebrations of Uzbekistan's independence day and the 2,200th anniversary of Tashkent, the Uzbek capital. (RFE/RL)

U.S.-BRITISH-KAZAKH MILITARY EXERCISES BEGIN IN KAZAKHSTAN

14 September

The opening ceremonies for nearly two weeks of military exercises involving Kazakh, U.S., and British personnel have taken place in Kazakhstan's

Ili region, near Almaty, RFE/RL's Kazakh Service reports. The maneuvers, called "Steppe Eagle 2009," are being held under the auspices of NATO. Kazakh Defense Minister Adilbek Dzhaksybekov took part in the opening ceremony along with British Ambassador Paul Barmmel and U.S. Ambassador to Kazakhstan Richard Hoagland. NATO representatives from Brussels also attended. More than 1,300 troops and 100 military vehicles and airplanes are participating in the exercises, which are scheduled to last until September 26. The main goal of the maneuvers is to train the military personnel in operating a peacekeeping mission in a conflict zone. The first "Steppe Eagle" exercises were held in Kazakhstan in 2003. British forces joined the maneuvers the following year. (RFE/RL)

U.S. OFFERS TO KAZAKHSTAN TO TAKE PART IN OPERATIONS IN AFGHANISTAN

14 September

U.S. Ambassador to Kazakhstan Richard Hoagland has offered to Kazakhstan to take part in the peacekeeping mission in Afghanistan. In his speech given at the opening ceremony of the military training Steppe Eagle-2009 on the Ilisky testing ground in Kazakhstan on Monday, Hoagland said Kazakhstan may again become part of the international NATO peacekeeping force in Afghanistan. Among the participants in the Steppe Eagle-2009 training are over 1,300 servicemen from Kazakhstan, the UK, and the U.S. The training also involved over 100 units of combat and special equipment and military transport aircraft. This training is conducted in accordance with earlier signed documents and treaties on various aspects of military and military-technical cooperation, the Kazakh Defense Ministry reported. The purpose of the training is to check the coordination of Kazbrigunits and the NATO forces in peacekeeping operations and to hone commanders' practical skills in managing units, organizing interaction between them during peacekeeping operations, the ministry said in its report. (Interfax)

US MILITARY DEATH IN AFGHANISTAN REGION AT 752

14 September

As of Monday, Sept. 14, 2009, at least 752 members of the U.S. military had died in Afghanistan, Pakistan and Uzbekistan as a result of the U.S. invasion of Afghanistan in late 2001, according to the Defense Department. The department last

updated its figures Monday at 10 a.m. EDT. Of those, the military reports 575 were killed by hostile action. Outside the Afghan region, the Defense Department reports 69 more members of the U.S. military died in support of Operation Enduring Freedom. Of those, three were the result of hostile action. The military lists these other locations as Guantanamo Bay Naval Base, Cuba; Djibouti; Eritrea; Ethiopia; Jordan; Kenya; Kyrgyzstan; Philippines; Seychelles; Sudan; Tajikistan; Turkey; and Yemen. There were also four CIA officer deaths and one military civilian death. (AP)

THREE MILITANTS KILLED IN SPECIAL OPERATION IN DAGESTAN

14 September

During a special operation conducted by the Federal Security Service and the Interior Ministry, three militants were destroyed in Dagestan's Derbent region on Sunday night. As ITAR-TASS learnt at the press service of the Interior Ministry for Dagestan, "at about 21.00 Moscow time, police officers tried to stop a car with three militants to check their documents." According to the press service, "the car driver didn't obey the demand to spot. During a chase, the militants opened fire and were destroyed in return fire." Two submachine-guns, several grenades and ammunition were found in the car. The incident occurred in the federal highway Kavkaz not far from the village of Gedzhukh of the Derbent region. The identity of two militants was established. They were members of a gang operating on the territory of Southern Dagestan. The gang was led by certain Validzhanov. (Itar-Tass)

UKRAINE, TURKMENISTAN PLAN MORE GAS SUPPLY TALKS

15 September

Turkmenistan and Ukraine plan more talks on natural gas supply after the presidents of the two ex-Soviet countries met on Tuesday, five months after a pipeline blast cut off supplies of Turkmen gas to Russia and beyond. Russia, which sells Turkmen gas on to Ukraine, stopped buying gas from Central Asia's largest producer in April following a pipeline explosion that Turkmen officials at the time blamed on Moscow. Supplies have yet to be restored. Neither Ukrainian President Viktor Yushchenko nor his Turkmen counterpart, Kurbanguly Berdymukhamedov, gave details about their talks in Ashgabat. After the meeting, Yushchenko said: "We will continue talks on cooperation in energy, in

the gas sector." Ukraine has said it is interested in buying gas directly from Turkmenistan and paying Russia only a transit fee, a system used in the 1990s with which Russian state gas export monopoly Gazprom may not now agree. Turkmenistan is moving out of Moscow's shadow by offering gas, drawn from the world's fourth-largest reserves, to eager buyers in Europe. It has, in particular, expressed willingness to supply the European Union-backed Nabucco pipeline, a project in which Ukraine wants to take part. The pipeline would reduce the EU's reliance on imports of gas from or through Russia. But with construction yet to begin on pipeline projects to bypass Russia, Turkmenistan needs the support of its Soviet-era master more than Moscow needs its gas to serve a European market where demand has dropped significantly this year. Turkmenistan is in talks with Gazprom to renew supplies to Russia, but the two sides have not yet struck a deal. Analysts say a prolonged disruption of supplies to Russia would put pressure on Turkmenistan's economy, which is bleeding up to \$1 billion in monthly export revenues due to the row. Gas exports to Russia, which used to amount to about 50 billion cubic metres a year, were one of the key sources of foreign currency for Turkmenistan. (Reuters)

NAGORNO-KARABAKH CONFLICT SETTLEMENT MUST BE PART OF TALKS TO NORMALIZE TURKEY-ARMENIA RELATIONS'

15 September

Settlement of the Nagorno-Karabakh problem must be a part of the talks to normalize relations between Turkey and Armenia, said deputy director of Paris-based Institute of International and Strategic Relations Didier Billion in his interview with Turkey's Cihan News Agency. He noted the process of normalization of relations and efforts to resolve the Nagorno-Karabakh dispute should run in parallel. Billion quoted Turkish Premier Recep Tayyip Erdogan saying "we will not open the border unless the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict is resolved", adding he hopes the dispute between Azerbaijan and Armenia will be resolved through dynamic activities of Turkish diplomacy and efforts by the OSCE Minsk Group. Billion also underlined Turkey must be included into the conflict settlement process along with the OSCE Minsk Group co-chair countries - the United States, France and Russia. The Nagorno-Karabakh problem must

not be forgotten while discussing the normalization of relations, he added. (AzerTAc).

RUSSIA SIGNS DEAL TO PROTECT GEORGIA'S REBEL REGIONS

15 September

Russia has signed a deal to protect Georgia's rebel regions of Abkhazia and South Ossetia for nearly 50 years. The accord with the two breakaway republics allows the Kremlin to establish bases with up to 1,700 soldiers in each. Only Nicaragua and Venezuela have followed Moscow in recognising the regions' independence. Tbilisi denounced Tuesday's agreement describing it as a 'barbaric occupation'. Georgia's navy is blockading ships en route to Abkhazia and Russia also threatened to seize any vessel it finds in Abkhaz waters, further ratcheting up tensions in the Black Sea. Both rebel regions threw off Tbilisi's rule after the collapse of the Soviet Union in the early 1990s, but are wholly dependant on Moscow to survive. In August last year, the Kremlin crushed a Georgian attempt to regain South Ossetia in a short but bitter war. (EuroNews)

EU SAYS 1.1 MILLION VOTES FOR AFGHAN LEADER SUSPICIOUS

16 September

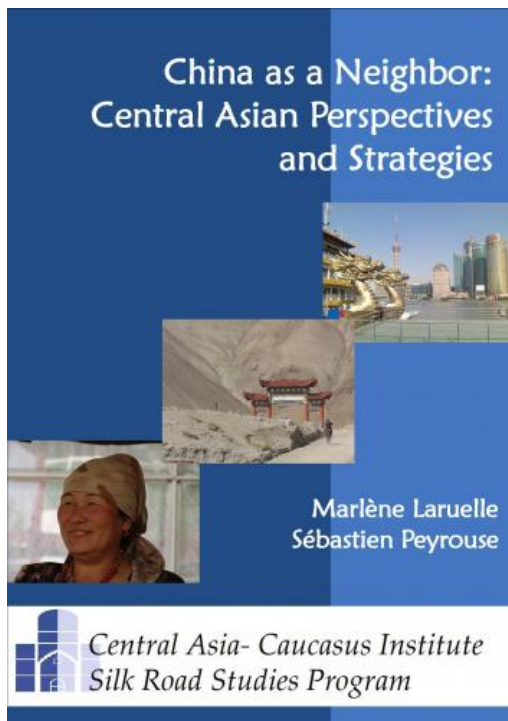
As many as one-third of votes cast for Afghan incumbent Hamid Karzai in last month's presidential election are suspect and must be checked for fraud, the head of a European Union election observer mission has said. The announcement by the largest foreign observer team in Afghanistan suggesting fraud on a massive scale came hours before authorities were due to issue a preliminary final tally expected to show Karzai with enough votes to win in a single round. The fraud accusations have come at a particularly difficult time for U.S. President Barack Obama, who has already ordered thousands of additional troops to Afghanistan and is expected to make a decision in coming weeks about whether to send more. The war is already becoming increasingly unpopular at home, and Obama may find it more difficult to persuade Americans to send soldiers to die to defend a government whose legitimacy could be called into question. The preliminary final result can still be overturned by a separate body, the UN-backed Electoral Complaints Commission, which has already ordered a recount of 10 percent of polling stations after finding "clear and convincing evidence of fraud." Philippe Morillon, head of the EU

observer team, told Reuters his team believed 1.5 million votes were suspicious, including 1.1 million cast for Karzai and 300,000 cast for his main rival, former Foreign Minister Abdullah Abdullah. In near-complete figures issued last week, Karzai had slightly more than 3 million votes, or 54.3 percent of the 5.54 million valid votes counted. Were all the votes described by Morillon as "suspicious" to be removed from that preliminary tally, Karzai would fall just short of the 50 percent needed to win in a single round, and would instead face a runoff against Abdullah. Morillon said fraud had been carried out by "unscrupulous, overzealous supporters...from every camp," and that fraudulent ballots needed to be removed from the count before any result could be considered final. "Any claim for any count or of victory will be premature and not credible," he said. Four weeks after the election, Afghanistan remains mired in political limbo, with results trickling out as fraud accusations mounted, undermining faith in the vote both in Afghanistan and among Western nations with troops fighting there. The UN-backed ECC must sign off on any final result, and its fraud probe could potentially force a second round if it invalidates enough ballots to put Karzai below the 50 percent threshold needed to win in a single round and avoid a runoff. The

recount process has only just begun and could take weeks or even months. (Reuters)

GEORGIA'S FDI (FOREIGN DIRECT INVESTMENT) DOWN BY 80.2% IN H1 16 September

Foreign direct investments (FDI) in Georgia fell to USD 226.1 million in the first half of 2009, down from USD 1.143 billion in the same period of 2008, according to the Georgian Statistics Department. 2009 second quarter FDI was also down to USD 92.18 million, against USD 133.9 million in the first quarter of this year. (Initial figures for Q1 FDI released by the Statistic Department in June showed USD 124.7 million, instead of now released figure - USD 133.9 mln). The bulk of the second quarter FDI - USD 73.6 million - came from the United Arab Emirates. Like in the first quarter, transport and communications suffered most with outflows of USD 16.4 million in the second quarter of the year; followed by the energy and agriculture sectors - USD 4.8 million and USD 4.4 million, respectively. Real estate saw the most foreign investment, at USD 57.7 in the second quarter, reaching total of USD 81.3 million in the first half of 2009. Construction sector attracted USD 3.6 million in the second quarter, down from USD 4.3 million in the first quarter of 2009. (Civil Georgia)



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