

DAILY REPORT ON RUSSIA

AND THE FORMER SOVIET REPUBLICS

INTERCON INTERNATIONAL USA, INC., 725 15th STREET, N.W., SUITE 903,
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20005 -- 202-347-2624 -- FAX 202-347-4631

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RUSSIAN FEDERATION

Politics

Tatar Nationalists Rally For Independence

• A rally commemorating the Tatars who died during Ivan the Terrible's invasion of Kazan in the 16th century, took place near the Tatarstan administration building on Sunday. According to Interfax-Eurasia, the rally participants adopted a resolution calling on the Russian and Tatar governments to pass legislation acknowledging the, "full independence of Tatarstan, to create a confederation of republics Idel (Volga-Urals), to ban Russian passports and introduce their own [passports], and to transfer power organs under the local jurisdiction." The creators of the document believe that the Tatar government has accepted, "anti-people, betrayal policy" towards the republic, "giving up the achievements of sovereignty." The participants of the rally also accused the federal government of "committing the next aggression against the Tatar people," [Izvestia](#) reported. Leader of the All-Tatar Public Center (ATPC) Rashit YAGAFAROV stated that, "a number of Tatar political and public organizations united into a People's front to defend the sovereignty of the republic and the interests of the Tatar people." He called on the Tatars to unite and "win or die," achieving this goal. According to the representative of the Tatar public center in the city of Naberezhnye Chelny, Farid GAZIEV, "the current situation was caused by the Tatar government which has made serious political mistakes over the last years." The rally participants burnt a poster with the Russian double-headed eagle, Tsar Ivan the Terrible, and the maps of the Moscow duchy. They chanted Azatlyk (Freedom) and Berdemlyk (Independence). Some protested called for the establishment of an Islamic state. Those who addressed the rally claimed that Muslims not only in Russia but also in Palestine, Chechnya and Afghanistan are being suppressed.

They are asking Allah to punish the U.S. which has turned into "the devil's country." Some 100 volunteers have already expressed the wish to fight on the Taliban side in Afghanistan, BBC Monitoring reported. Banners carried during the rally stated, "Flush PUTIN down the Hague Tribunal," "No Tatar bread for slaves of the empire," "Tatars united - a powerful nation" and other slogans. According to the local law enforcement agencies, over 2,500 people participated in the rally. The militia did not interfere in the rally. The republic's government officials did not participate in the rally. Kazan was captured by the army of Ivan the Terrible on October 15, 1552.

Russia To Assist US In Anthrax Outbreak

• Following several anthrax outbreaks in the US, Russia on Monday offered to help fight off the deadly disease. The outbreaks delivered through the mail are considered to be biological warfare retaliation to U.S. strikes in Afghanistan. Moscow has also developed its own anti-anthrax treatment, which Benjamin CHERKASSKY, a leading anthrax expert, says is completely different from the one used in the U.S. Russia's Health Ministry spokeswoman Lyubov VOROPAYEVA said Monday that Russia was ready to share it with the U.S., "if the necessity arises." Russian Health Minister Yuri SHEVCHENKO said his country could help with medicines and vaccines. "We have everything prepared for the eventuality of an outbreak," he said in televised comments. "We can also help our American colleagues... We

have vaccinations, and our own technology... There's nothing to be afraid of, but we should be vigilant," he said. But U.S. scientists say at least one genetically altered strain of anthrax, developed at the Obolensk facility in 1997, is resistant to the Russian vaccine and might defeat the one employed in the U.S. as well. Some research has clandestinely continued in later years under the guise of defensive programs, says Ken ALIBEK, who defected to the U.S. in 1992 after serving as deputy head of the huge Biopreparat venture linked to germ warfare, the Associated Press reported. Among their achievements was developing anthrax said to be resistant to antibiotics.

Moscow Poll On US-led Strikes

- According to a poll conducted by VTsIOM and reported by Interfax on Friday, 56 percent of Muscovites do not support the anti-terrorist operations being conducted by the U.S. and the U.K. in Afghanistan, while 41 percent do approve of them. The same poll found that 72 percent of the residents of the Russian capital would oppose strikes against other countries Washington has identified as harboring terrorists, such as Iraq, Iran, and Libya. The poll also showed that 66 percent of Muscovites are concerned that Russia may be attacked by terrorist forces and that only 8 percent believe Russian forces should participate in the U.S.-led antiterrorist campaign, RFE\RL Newslines reported. It should be noted that Russian President Vladimir PUTIN has taken several steps to move closer to the U.S., against his top advisors advice. One question is whether PUTIN has climbed out on a limb.

Economy

<p>Ruble = 29.51/\$1.00 (NY rate) Ruble = 29.54/\$1.00 (CB rate) Ruble = 26.71/1 euro (CB rate)</p>
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Russia Makes WTO Key Priority

- Russia's President Vladimir PUTIN today said that he considers World Trade Organization (WTO) membership a key priority and was confident it would boost the country's economy. He noted that accession to the WTO should be carefully coordinated as, "many of our goods are not competitive and we must carefully analyze the consequences." Russia's chief WTO negotiator and Deputy Economics Minister, Maxim MEDVEDKOV, said in an interview

with Kommersant that work on a key report, laying the basis of Russia's WTO membership bid, should start early next year. "This [work on the report] will be a qualitative leap in the negotiating process as, alongside issues of the access to goods, issues of tariffs and access to services, problems of a systemic character will be discussed." The working group includes the U.S. and the European Union, Russia's main trading partners, as well as any other WTO countries wishing to join. All WTO states have the right to negotiate agreements with any would-be member. Russia has been negotiating to join since 1993, but says it is now making more intensive efforts. MEDVEDKOV said Russia would speed up its preparation for the talks and would draft a report on its foreign trade regime in November. It has also undertaken to draft a range of laws related to WTO entry by the end of the year. These included laws on import and export licensing, foreign trade protection and state regulation of agriculture, Reuters reported. Visiting U.S. Commerce Secretary Donald EVANS told reporters Monday the U.S. will support Russia's bid to enter the WTO as Moscow continues to develop a market-based economy. He discussed the issue with Russian Trade and Economic Development Minister German GREF, who pledged that the Russian government would, "make all efforts needed to create the most comfortable conditions for American investors."

Business

Gazprom To Participate In Chinese Pipeline

- Gas giant *Gazprom* hopes Chinese officials will decide on the winning bid to build a \$20 billion gas pipeline by October 22nd, or maybe a little later. *Gazprom* hopes to participate in the project for a 4,000-kilometer pipeline spanning China from west to east. Chinese officials said earlier this month that state energy firm *PetroChina* was hoping to get *ExxonMobil*, *Royal Dutch/Shell Group*, and *Gazprom* on board for the project. A *Gazprom* source told Reuters that *Shell* was well placed to be the main winner in the project, but that *Gazprom* would also participate. The giant pipeline could be on the agenda of *Gazprom* chief executive officer Alexei MILLER when he visits Shanghai this week as part of a delegation of businessmen accompanying President Vladimir PUTIN to the APEC meeting. It is likely that MILLER will meet Chinese energy officials during his trip. PUTIN will attend a meeting

of business leaders at the Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) forum and then meet other leaders from the vast region represented at the meeting at an October 20th to 21st summit.

EUROPEAN REPUBLICS

Ukraine To Ratify Gas Agreement

- The Ukrainian Cabinet has sent repeatedly to the parliament a bill on the ratification of three agreements with Russia: on restructuring Ukraine's debt for Russian gas, on the guarantees for Russian gas transit over the Ukrainian territory and on terms of reserve supplies of gas, and pay for fuel in 2001. Parliament had returned the bill to the Cabinet for reworking because it contains a provision banning Ukraine's export of natural gas. Deputies believe this is discriminatory, ITAR-TASS reported. The agreements on the guarantees for the transit of Russian gas over the Ukrainian territory and on the terms of gas supplies and payment for fuel were signed on December 22, 2000. The sides, specifically, agreed on granting a seasonal credit for two months in case of need. Russia is supposed to give credit to Ukraine in the form of monthly supplies of one billion cubic meters of gas in case of its shortage in the winter season or if emergencies arise. In addition, the sides agreed on setting up a stand-by fund of five billion cubic meters of gas. It will be drawn on in case of technical problems or other force majeure circumstances. The intergovernmental agreement on rescheduling Ukraine's debt for gas was signed by the Ukrainian and Russian premiers on October 4th. It envisages rescheduling the debt of *Neftegaz Ukrainy* for earlier supplied Russian gas in the amount of \$1.4 billion for 12 years with a three-year grace period.

Ukraine Strengthens Border With Russia

- Ukraine strengthened its eastern borders with Russia to stop illegal immigrants flowing from Afghanistan following U.S. strikes on that country. Foreign Minister Anatoly ZLENKO said Ukraine was concerned that terrorists and illegal immigrants from Asia could penetrate Ukraine. "All of us should understand that the declared war against terrorism touches Ukraine as well," ZLENKO said. "It concerns our national interests, whose essential part is securing peace and prosperity for our nationals," the St.

Petersburg Time quoted the official as saying.

SOUTH CAUCASUS & CENTRAL ASIA

Shevardnadze-OSCE Discuss Peacekeepers

- Georgian President Eduard SHEVARDNADZE met with an Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) delegation, led by Chairman of the OSCE permanent council Liviu BOTA. The Georgian President proposed an invitation to international peacekeeping forces to the zone of the Georgian-Abkhaz conflict. It is necessary to negotiate with other countries for international peacekeepers to be sent to Abkhazia. He noted that the CIS peacekeepers, which have been in this zone for seven years, are not fulfilling their mandate. SHEVARDNADZE believes that the best way out in this situation is to exchange CIS peacekeepers for international forces. At a meeting with the OSCE delegation today, SHEVARDNADZE said that if the international peacekeeper contingent is sent to Abkhazia, Russia might play a decisive role in it. The Georgian President noted that his Ukrainian counterpart Leonid KUCHMA has already agreed to participate in peacekeeping operations in Abkhazia. At the same time, SHEVARDNADZE stressed that international organizations have not agree to this initiative so far, the Black Sea Press agency reported. Georgia hopes that the Abkhaz conflict will be resolved by the Balkan or Kosovo scenario.

BOTA said that the situation in Abkhazia is "complicated." He stressed that it cannot be solved with the use of force. Denying some of the statements of the Georgian media, he stated that the UN Observer Mission in Georgia (UNOMIG) is not going to leave Abkhazia. He did not answer the question whether the OSCE would send peacekeepers to the zone of the Georgian-Abkhaz conflict. He said that an official statement from the Georgian government is needed. The UN Security Council should also deal with this issue, BOTA said.

Russian Ambassador to Georgia Vladimir Gudev said that at this point the Russian peacekeepers do not participate in any military operations of the Abkhaz Army and the Georgian-Chechen gunmen. However, according to their mandate, they have a right to defend themselves.

Anthrax Found At Kazakh Facility

- U.S. inspectors found anthrax spores inside piping at a Soviet-era biological weapons facility in Kazakhstan during a routine inspection this week. The Kazakh Embassy issued a statement emphasizing the discovery was entirely unrelated to anthrax scares in the U.S. and linked to efforts to dismantle what was the world's biggest anthrax production site in Soviet times. Experts fear that some of the anthrax made in former Soviet facilities may have found its way to criminals or extremist groups. The Kazakh Embassy said the country had been steadfast in its commitment to disarming and de-weaponizing the weapons of mass destruction and associated facilities it inherited from Soviet days.

Kazakh Uranium Head Dismissed

- Kazakh Prime Minister Kasymzhomart TOKAYEV has dismissed Mukhtar DZHAKISHEV from his post as president of *Kazatomprom*, which is Kazakhstan's monopoly importer and exporter of uranium, Interfax reported. No reason was given for his dismissal.

U.S.-Uzbek Base Agreement

- The U.S. and Uzbekistan have reached an agreement over Uzbekistan's air bases. U.S. troops have been given permission to operate from the Uzbek bases and the U.S. pledged to protect security for Uzbekistan. According to a joint statement on Friday, "We will work together to support delivery of humanitarian assistance to the people of Afghanistan. We also commit ourselves to eliminate international terrorism and its infrastructure... For these purposes, the Republic of Uzbekistan has agreed to provide the use of its air space and necessary military and civilian infrastructure of one of its airports." In the statement, the Bush administration promised to, "consult on an urgent basis about appropriate steps to address the situation in the event of a direct threat to the security or territorial integrity of the Republic of Uzbekistan." The two nations pledged "a new relationship based on a

long-term commitment to advance security and regional stability." About 1,000 members of the Army's 10th Mountain Division are already at the base. Uzbek leaders have said the soldiers at the base would only participate in humanitarian or search-and-rescue operations, but the base also could be a staging area for combat raids. The Washington Post on Sunday reported that both nations have engaged in joint covert operations aimed at the Taliban regime. U.S. military specialists are installing necessary equipment at the Uzbek Khanabad airfield to accommodate U.S. military-transport planes. Meanwhile, the Uzbek army is on the alert and ready to defend its country, the Uzbek Defense Ministry said on Friday. Uzbekistan's position over the U.S.-led strikes in Afghanistan has remained unchanged. "No ground fighting and bombing of Afghanistan will be conducted from the territory of Uzbekistan," according to a Defense Ministry statement.

Japan Grants Tajikistan \$2 Million In Aid

- Japan pledged 240 million yen (\$1.98 million) in emergency aid to Tajikistan Friday to help it cope with refugees from Afghanistan, where U.S.-led air strikes began on Sunday. "There are currently believed to be some 15,000 Afghan refugees in Tajikistan, and an increase is predicted," deputy Chief Cabinet Secretary Kosei UENO told Reuters. The grant, the latest in a series of pledges made to nations that border Afghanistan, was made in response to a request from the Tajikistan government. Japan agreed to give \$40 million in assistance to Pakistan last week. It has also pledged some 20 percent, or around \$6 million, of the \$29 million requested by the U.N. refugee agency UNHCR for emergency funds for the next two months to cope with a possible influx of some 1.5 million Afghan refugees to Pakistan. In addition, Japan has said it is willing to extend from around 20 percent up to a limit of around \$120 million of the \$548 million that the U.N. has said may be needed over the next six months to aid Afghans.

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