

Militia Outsmarts Mafia

By Julie Poucher
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The roads from the Moscow oblast to Russia's capital are paved with bank signs and gangsters, as borders melt, commercialism spreads and OMON and local crime fighters try to stifle mafia wars.

"Citizen bandits; we know you're in there... we know how many of you there are, surrender your weapons.... think of your young lives," said the OMON commander through the megaphone, as a round of shots were fired and a man in fatigues scaled the outside wall of a brick building.

But this was only a demonstration of daily exercises by Lyubertsy police,

whose industrial city is only a sprint east of Moscow, and whose crime problems are quickly worsening.

"In all regions close to the ring road, serious crimes are a big problem," said deputy police chief of the Moscow oblast, Alexei Semko. "The immigration process between the Moscow oblast and Moscow is ongoing."

"The main mafia groups know no boundaries," explained Yuri Yukhman, chief of the Lyubertsy police department. Each region contributes its own mafia which adds strength to and competition for the Solntsevo, Azeri and Chechen mobs — groups with the most control in Moscow, Yukhman said.

(Continued on Page 7)