

Soviet secession law right out of Orwell

The new Law on Secession passed by the U.S.S.R. Supreme Soviet, which U.S. Secretary of State James "Munich" Baker praised on April 5, guarantees that, at least under this law, no republic would ever become independent. The new "secession" law is infinitely worse than the old U.S.S.R. Constitution article allowing for a republic to secede, which it has replaced.

The procedures now for a republic achieving independence are as follows: 1) The republic's parliament must first vote by a two-thirds majority, the republic's desire for independence. 2) Six months after that vote, the republic's population must hold a referendum, where again a two-thirds pro-independence vote is required. 3) Should that hurdle be cleared, then a mandatory *five year* period of "negotiations" between Moscow and the republic's leadership occurs, where all the economic, financial, and trade obligations (to the U.S.S.R.), military basing rights for the Red Army, the republic's new borders, *ad nauseam*, are to be regulated and "settled." On the borders' question, the law calls for not only

a republic-wide referendum, but for separate referenda in each district where minorities live.

This would ensure that large parts of the Baltic Republics, where the population is Russian (or, in Lithuania's case, Polish) would vote against independence, and for these regions to secede from the independent republic. So, at best, in theory, a territorially truncated "republic" can emerge, "independent," after five and one half years.

Soviet "lawmakers," however, are far-sighted. After these long, arduous, five and a half years, the republic's "independence" must then be approved by the new U.S.S.R. Federal Council, consisting of all 15 republic presidents and Gorbachov, and then ratified by the overwhelmingly Russian U.S.S.R. Congress of People's Deputies.

Should every "Catch 22" built into this particular law somehow fail to prevent independence, Gorbachov and his U.S.S.R. Supreme Soviet passed a parallel law in the same first week of April—the one the Western press is not even nominally covering—immediately after the "secession" law was passed. This law, called the Law to uphold "the Territorial Integrity of the U.S.S.R.," established the "legal" mechanism for the new President—Czar Gorbachov—to impose at any time where "actions by a republic" are "threatening the territorial integrity of the U.S.S.R.," direct presidential rule from Moscow over a republic, without having to first even consult with a republic's leadership, let alone get their approval.—*Konstantin George*

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