

Yeltsin to rule Russia by emergency decree

by Konstantin George

A tough regime of emergency rule in Russia, imposed by decree through Russian President Boris Yeltsin, will definitely be the response to the winter food crisis which is fast approaching. Any doubts to this effect were removed in Yeltsin's opening speech on Oct. 28 to the Russian Congress of People's Deputies, where he made it clear that it is only a matter of time before he proclaims a full-scale state of emergency in response to Russia's most serious supply crisis since World War II.

In the economic realm, Yeltsin, obsessed with Russia surviving the next six to nine months, committed a blunder by launching a policy of what could be termed "partial shock therapy" as the bitter pill to acquire desperately needed western aid. However, entering shock therapy "partially" is like entering quicksand. Once the feet are in, shock therapy establishes itself as the overriding dynamic governing the course of the economy.

Given the deliberate sabotage of the Bush administration and the U.S.-dominated international institutions such as the International Monetary Fund and the Group of Seven (G-7) leading industrial nations, which have placed Russia and the other independent nations of the former Soviet Union under a de facto credit and aid embargo, nothing short of draconian measures can cope with the food shortages.

This policy of sabotage was restated by President Bush in his Oct. 29 meeting in Madrid, Spain with his condominium counterpart, Mikhail Gorbachov. Bush refused to act on Russia's urgent request for \$3.5-4 billion in U.S. credits for export of food and feed grains, declaring that this would require "further talks and consultations." Beyond that, Bush demanded agreements on political and economic cooperation "between the Center and the republics" as a condition for aid, despite the obvious that the "Center" is not functioning.

Adequate food is needed to prevent a tragedy for millions of people in Russia, and is the key to whether Russia can begin to extricate itself from the devastating crisis of decades-long disinvestment in infrastructure and the industrial-agricultural civilian economy that Bolshevism has bequeathed it. This disinvestment-caused crisis brings us to the key question: Can Russia begin to enact—starting now, before the effects of the winter crisis demoralize the population—a program for investment and construction in the most vital infrastructure projects, centered in modern transport, storage, and other food and supply-relevant facilities, to ensure that this winter crisis be the last such nightmare in Russian history?

Bush targets Russia and Ukraine

Food, as Washington knows—and thus its policy of food-blackmail—is the decisive issue governing future relations between the two most important nations of the former Soviet Union—Russia and Ukraine. Establish the parameters to ensure a conflict between these two nations, and the consequences will destabilize all of Eurasia. Contrary to the lies and mythology spread in the international media, assisted by black propaganda from news organs of the old Moscow Center, there are no real or serious conflicts between Russia and Ukraine concerning Ukrainian independence, "inter-ethnic relations" in Ukraine between Ukrainians and Russians, and, least of all, concerning "control of nuclear weapons."

The dynamic of avoiding or defusing conflicts and differences continued with the signing in Kiev Oct. 30 of a Russian-Ukrainian protocol by, on the Russian side, Foreign Minister Andrei Kozyrev and Defense Minister Gen. Konstantin Kobets, and, on the Ukrainian side, Foreign Minister Slenko and Gen. Konstantin Morozov. The protocol announces Russia's intention to respect the independence and

territorial integrity of Ukraine in exchange for Ukraine ensuring protection of the rights of the 11 million Russian minority within its territory. The protocol also asserted Russia's agreement with Ukraine's creation of its own Armed Forces, and a framework for dividing up the Soviet Union's foreign assets, including embassies and Foreign Ministry personnel.

There is one danger for conflict, which has its cause not in Moscow or Kiev, but can be labeled "made in the U.S.A." Ukraine has a food surplus, while Russia has a massive food deficit. The Bush-led sabotage of comprehensive international food aid to Russia brings out the worst side of the Russian leadership, in that they begin to escalate pressure on Ukraine to increase food deliveries. This dynamic is already occurring behind the scenes. Ukraine, knowing all too well the danger that a desperate, hungry Russia can pose, is going out of its way to supply all it can. But on its own, Ukraine can only meet a fraction of the Russian food deficit. Unless some western governments wake up to what is happening, this crisis will reach a critical stage sometime this winter.

The policy instruments to realize the true national interests of Russia, as a nation and not an empire, have been provided by U.S. presidential candidate Lyndon LaRouche. A "Food For Peace" policy, which LaRouche presented in Berlin in 1988, outlines a coordinated western aid policy to provide enough food to eliminate any danger of hunger or famine in Russia and other republics and to get these republics over the short-term crisis. At the same time, the massive western-assisted infrastructure and other modernization projects related to the LaRouche program to develop the heavily industrialized "Productive Triangle" area (Paris-Berlin-Vienna), must act as the motor to eliminate the root causes of the economic crisis in Russia and the other newly free and independent nations. The key to solving the crisis is that the Russian leadership insist that western nations break with Bush and adopt policies in the direction urged by LaRouche, to stabilize and develop the new nations of Europe.

The problem with Yeltsin and the Russian leadership is that because they are so obsessed with "getting through" the next nine months, that they are willing to make horrible concessions to the Washington-led IMF mafia, in exchange for as-yet only hoped for credits and aid. The very concessions being demanded, in the form of shock therapy, will only ensure that Russia will become locked in to an unending cycle of short-term crises.

Russian presidential dictatorship

In his speech, Yeltsin asked the deputies to grant him extraordinary powers to make any and all changes in personnel and power structures necessary to remove obstacles to overcoming the crisis. The deputies are expected to comply. Yeltsin will have the power to fill any post and remove any office-holder at all levels in the Russian Federation, the Russian Center, and at the regional, district, city, and town level. Yeltsin announced that for the duration of the crisis—up to



Boris Yeltsin, at the U.S. State Department following a meeting with Secretary of State James Baker in 1989. If Yeltsin wants to save Russia, he'd better demand a change in U.S. policy.

one year—all appointments will be made by him. Elections, beginning with the planned Dec. 1 Russian Federation local elections, will be dispensed with. In his words, Russia cannot afford "the luxury of elections" in this situation.

Yeltsin will move fairly soon to expand these powers to include draconian measures to ensure food supplies to the large cities and industrial centers. In his speech, he emphasized that the greatest priority will be attached to what he called "the main problem" of the coming winter: "supplying the population of the big cities and large industrial centers."

The most dangerous part of the program announced, the price liberalization, would inaugurate "partial shock therapy." This is not, at least not yet, the surrender to the free market dogma of no price controls, where everything sky-rockets upward in price. Yeltsin stipulated that the price liberalization would not occur immediately, but "before the end of the year." It would be "an organized, controlled liberalization" of prices, and there would be "compensation" for the poorer classes and income categories. Beyond that, there is no way of telling from the Russian text of the speech how broad the price liberalization will be. Yeltsin spoke of a "freeing of prices," leaving it completely ambiguous whether he meant prices across the board, or some prices.

However, a shock for the population is definitely coming, and Yeltsin wasn't kidding when he called his new course the "toughest decision of my life" and one that would decide his political future. Should he plunge ahead to execute the wrong turn he has taken, Yeltsin will be a purely transitional figure. And indeed, only two months after the August events, most Russians have already come to this conclusion.