



Russian oligarchs Konstantin Kagalovsky and Natasha Gurfinkel. Kagalovsky are closely linked to Wall Street, Al Gore, and the City of London. Konstantin was Russia's liaison to the International Monetary Fund in the early 1990s, while Natasha worked for the Bank of New York. The two were involved in a scheme that was exposed in 1999, to loot at least \$15 billion from Russia.



One of the Russian oligarchs whom President Putin denounced in his televised interview: Vladimir Gusinsky, general director of the Media-Most Group.

cas generally, in Africa, and in Eurasia generally, is the site of a local political firestorm either in flames, or about to erupt. It is not the tinder of the local hot-spot which causes this phenomenon; it is, rather, the heat of the global crisis of the financial system which seeks out, and tends to ignite all available tinder, such as the case of the sinking of the *Kursk*. In this state of affairs, those firestorms tend to come together, threatening an early global conflagration of awesome, but otherwise unpredictable, intensity, duration, and consequence.”

While the U.S. and European media have all but blacked out any relevant news about the sinking of the *Kursk*, choosing

instead to heap ridicule on the Russian military and on Putin, Russian officials and some Russian press have providing chilling evidence of just how close the world was to thermo-nuclear extinction on Aug. 12-13.

On Aug. 22, Pravda.ru ran a banner headline, “World War III Could Have Begun on Saturday.” The article, one of a series of carefully worded leaks from high-level Russian government sources, is found in the *Documentation* section of our *Feature* coverage. “For several days,” wrote Pravda.ru, “the world hung by a thread, and one false political move could have led to an exchange of nuclear strikes.” “Happily,” the paper concluded, “the incident in the Barents Sea was successfully resolved by political means. Agreement to ‘end the affair in peace’ was reached during a telephone conversation between Vladimir Putin and Bill Clinton.”

John Helmer, a Moscow-based journalist who writes for

Clinton's Los Angeles Speech Hinted at Crisis

On Aug. 12-14, as the *Kursk* affair was beginning to play out, President Bill Clinton was in Los Angeles, in preparation for the Democratic National Convention. It was during this time frame that the crucial Moscow-Washington military and Presidential consultations were occurring. Clinton, in his address to the opening session of the convention, made no direct mention of the crisis in the Barents Sea, but, at one point, made an historical reference, to emphasize that a sudden sequence of events can alter the course of history in a profound manner.

Near the end of his address, Clinton stated, “When I graduated from high school in 1964, I assumed, like most Americans, that our economy was on automatic—nothing could derail it. We thought our civil rights problems would be solved in Congress and the courts. We never dreamed Vietnam would so divide and wound our nation.

“Before we knew it, there were riots in the streets. Leaders I adored as a young man—Robert Kennedy and Martin Luther King—were killed. Lyndon Johnson, a President I admired for all he did for civil rights, the elderly, and the poor, said he would not run again because our land was so divided. The next election took America on a far different, more divisive course. And within months after that election, the last, longest economic expansion in history was, itself, history.” —Jeffrey Steinberg