

# Putin calls for reduced N-arsenal

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ASSOCIATED PRESS *Person* *W*

MOSCOW, March 31. — Russia's President-elect, Mr Vladimir Putin, who chose a key nuclear weapons centre for his first post-election trip, today called for quick ratification of the long-delayed START II nuclear arms treaty with the USA and further cuts in nuclear arsenals.

"We are setting the task to free the world from piles of excessive weapons," Mr Putin said in Snezhinsk city, known as Chelyabinsk-70 during Soviet times, a major nuclear weapons design and production facility in the Chelyabinsk

region about 950 miles east of Moscow.

Mr Putin said he ordered defence and foreign ministry officials to step up consultations in parliament to prepare for the START II ratification.

The 1993 treaty was ratified by the US Senate in 1996, but Communists and other hardliners who dominated the Russian parliament have balked at ratifying the treaty, saying START II would hurt Russia's security.

Communists lost control of the State Duma, parliament's lower House, after a strong showing of pro-government

*CF*  
moderates in December's parliamentary elections, and lawmakers are now expected to move faster toward ratification.

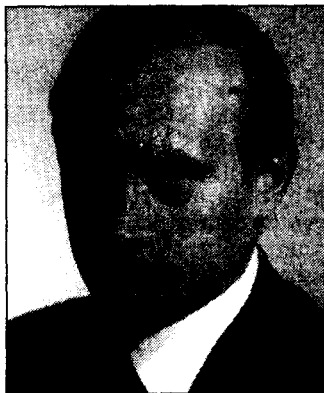
START II would halve US and Russian nuclear arsenals to between 3,000 and 3,500 warheads each, and preliminary talks have already begun on the new START III treaty that would envisage deeper cuts.

"Russia is holding and will continue talks on further cuts in the strategic offensive weapons," Mr Putin said, according to Russian news reports.

In a speech to Snezhinsk workers, Mr

Putin said the nuclear weapons industry should find a reasonable way to convert to civilian production, avoiding "thoughtless restructuring and layoffs".

Over the past several years, thousands of workers at the centre have repeatedly gone on strike to demand back wages, as once-lavish government funding has ground to a near halt. Shrinking defence spending has also led to layoffs, and workers have found it difficult to find civilian jobs in cities like Snezhinsk, which have remained closed to outsiders for security reasons.



Mr Vladimir Putin

THE STATESMAN

- 1 APR 2000

HD-17

# Coming into its own

**A**FTER 10 years of chaos and decline Russia is finally turning round. Twelve months after its first post-Soviet President, Mr. Boris Yeltsin, handed over the reins of power on New Year eve to his chosen successor, Mr. Vladimir Putin, the economy has posted a seven per cent growth, the highest in 30 years. Economic recovery is still shaky and largely depends on record-high oil prices. To achieve stable growth Russia must attract foreign investment and increase exports. Hence, Mr. Putin's preoccupation with foreign policy, which in line with his declared concept is to serve a very pragmatic goal of facilitating the economic revival at home.

Mr. Putin has become one of the world's most widely travelled leaders. Over the past eight months he has made 19 foreign visits and received at least as many foreign dignitaries at the Kremlin. His bustling activity stands in stark contrast with the near-total immobility of the ailing Mr. Yeltsin towards the end of his rule.

The contrast with Mr. Yeltsin's foreign policy is even more glaring. Mr. Putin has broken with the whimsical, bombastic, bear-hugging diplomacy of his predecessor in favour of an assertive and purposeful foreign policy within the constraints of Russia's drastically reduced military and economic might. Mr. Putin has overcome the syndrome of Russia's post-Soviet weakness and excessive focus on the United States. Moscow has learnt to conduct a multi-vectral foreign policy without looking back at Washington.

Russia's recent decision to ditch a 1995 confidential accord with the U.S. to halt weapon sales to Iran is a graphic example of Mr. Putin's new foreign policy. Washington, which continues to blacklist Iran as a "sponsor of terrorism", has threatened to slap economic sanctions against Russia, but Mr. Putin says he is not to be pushed around. "We will never allow anyone to dictate their will to us, he said at a recent meeting of top military brasshats in Moscow.

It is not just to poke a thumb in Washington's eye that Moscow is forging ties with countries labelled "rogue states" by the U.S. It is driven by pragmatic economic and strategic interests. Arms supplies to Iran are expected to bring billions of dollars to Russia in the next few years. Moreover, Kremlin sources say Iran may emerge as Russia's strategic partner, like India or China,

*Under Mr. Putin, Russia has learnt to conduct a multi-vectral foreign policy without looking back at Washington, writes VLADIMIR RADYUHIN*

and do not rule out Mr. Putin's visit to Teheran next year.

He has imparted new momentum to Russian ties with India and China and became the first Russian leader to visit North Korea. This week Mr. Putin will travel to Cuba to revive bilateral economic cooperation that fizzled out after the collapse of the Soviet Union, and to Canada, which shares Russia's concerns about U.S. plans to scrap the 1972 Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty. Russia recently opened talks with Libya for military contracts, defied the U.S.-imposed "no-fly zone"

Georgia, which shelters Chechen rebels, and charted out a new pipeline to Europe to bypass gas-stealing Ukraine.

In a further unravelling of Mr. Yeltsin's foreign policy, Russia ruled out handing over to Japan the disputed Kuril islands, a possibility Mr. Yeltsin hinted at two years ago. At a Foreign Ministers' conference of the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe a week ago Russia refused to set a timeframe for honouring the commitments Mr. Yeltsin made a year ago at an OSCE summit in Istanbul — to dismantle

newed Cold War confrontation. It is rather an attempt to combine firmness in upholding national interests with flexibility in seeking new foreign policy opportunities. Russia has resumed the Partnership for Peace programme with NATO, freezed in protest against NATO air strikes against Yugoslavia. Moscow has agreed to supply more natural gas to Europe to reduce the latter's dependence on West Asian oil. It has also sought to exploit Europe's striving for greater independence from the U.S. by proposing a joint missile defence with European states and offering to cooperate with a rapid reaction force contemplated by the European Union.

Russia's foreign policy partly owes its new boldness and sophistication to greater involvement of the foreign intelligence service, SVR, which has tradition-



**Mr. Vladimir Putin entertains Mr. Tony Blair at the Kremlin... spreading his wings.**

in Iraq to start humanitarian aid flights to Baghdad, and moved to reassert its role in the West Asian peace process.

Mr. Putin has drastically overhauled Mr. Yeltsin's inept and rudderless policy towards the former Soviet republics, moving to forge closer economic and military ties with pro-Moscow states, such as Belarus and Kazakhstan, and taking a tough stand against those which ignore Russian national interests. Russia has slapped visa restrictions against

Russian military bases in the ex-Soviet republic of Georgia, withdraw troops from Moldova and allow an OSCE mission into Chechnya. Last month Russia deployed nuclear-capable long-range bombers at its Arctic's bases to probe North America air defences. The Russian military said the bombers could be an expensive response to U.S. plans to build a national missile defence.

It would be wrong, however, to see these moves as signs of a re-

ally had a strong analytical component. Mr. Putin, a former KGB officer himself, has put a senior SVR general, Mr. Sergei Ivanov, in charge of the Kremlin's strategy-planning Security Council, and appointed the former SVR head, Mr. Vyacheslav Trubnikov, as First Deputy Foreign Minister.

What is more important, however, is the political will to defend national interests and play a more prominent role in world affairs, which Mr. Putin has and Mr. Yeltsin lacked.

# Goodbye Chernobyl: N-plant shuts finally

ASSOCIATED PRESS  
KIEV (UKRAINE), DEC 15

OPERATORS shut down the Chernobyl nuclear power plant with the flip of a switch Friday, closing the facility for good 14 years after it spawned the world's worst nuclear accident.

The simple procedure ended the long, troubled run of a facility that became a synonym for nuclear fears and the dangers of atomic power.

Ukraine President Leonid Kuchma gave the shutdown order from Kiev over a video linkup with the plant, located some 85 miles away. "To fulfill the state decision and Ukraine's international obligations, I hereby order to start work for the premature stoppage of the operation of reactor No. 3 at the Chernobyl nuclear power plant," Kuchma said.

At 1:16 p.m., Chernobyl shift chief Oleksandr Yelchishchev turned the black AZ switch, activating the automatic safety system of the plant's only working reactor and sending containment rods sliding into the reactor core.

Within seconds, a dial showed the reactor's output dropping to zero. The procedure went flaw-

lessly, the plant reported.

The shutdown, which followed years of intense international pressure, should erase the danger of future accidents at the plant. Yet Ukraine will suffer the effects of the 1986 Chernobyl accident for years to come: Millions of its citizens are affected by radiation-related ailments.

The leaders of this former Soviet republic said they were undertaking a historic mission in closing down the last functioning reactor at Chernobyl. "The world will become a safer place. People will sleep in peace," Kuchma said Thursday during a ceremony to commemorate the shutdown.

The plant's last reactor, the one shut down Friday, was reactor No. 3. It is located in the same building as reactor No. 4, which exploded and caught fire on April 26, 1986, contaminating vast areas of Ukraine, Russia and Belarus and spewing a radioactive cloud over Europe.

The Kremlin tried to conceal the accident and delayed evacuation of people from nearby towns for days. Firefighters and other workers who were the first at the destroyed reactor had little or no protection from radiation.

INDIAN EXPRESS

16 DEC 2000

## Russia, Chechen MPs call for peace talks

By Vladimir Radyuhin

MOSCOW, DEC. 24. Russian and Chechen parliamentarians have called for political dialogue to end the 15-month-long war amid growing signs that the Russian military campaign in the rebel region has reached an impasse.

Russian MPs met members of Chechnya's pro-independence Parliament for talks in the neighbouring republic of Ingushetia on Saturday in the first such contact after the Russian army launched a second attempt to crush Chechen separatists in October 1999.

Mr. Boris Nemtsov, leader of the SPS liberal party in Russia's Lower House of State Duma, told the NTV television on Sunday that a delegation of Russian MPs and Chechen legislators after four hours of talks signed a protocol which called for political dialogue to bring peace to war-torn Chechnya. The seven-member delegation consisted of legislators elected in 1997 after Chechnya won a de facto independence from Moscow following a two-year war. It also included representatives of the Chechen separatist leader and President, Mr. Aslan Maskhadov.

"We have agreed the Chechen problem has no military solution and political dialogue must be launched immediately to establish peace, end terrorism and banditry and create conditions for the return of refugees," Mr. Nemtsov, who led the Russian delegation, told the NTV television. "It is time to talk peace. Every week more people get killed in Chechnya than we lost in the Kursk submarine disaster, when 118 sailors died."

Mr. Nemtsov said negotiations should be conducted between the Russian government and repre-

sentatives of the Chechen Parliament and Mr. Maskhadov. So far the Kremlin has refused to talk about anything but the terms of the rebels' surrender.

It was not clear whether the Russian MPs acted with the approval of the Russian leadership, but Mr. Nemtsov said he would report the results of his mission to the President, Mr. Vladimir Putin, on Tuesday.

The meeting between Russian and Chechen MPs came a week after the Russian military acknowledged that its strategy to end rebel resistance has failed.

Russian troops nominally control the whole of Chechnya, but they continue to suffer daily casualties in hit-and-run attacks. The General Staff chief, Gen. Anatoly Kvashnin, admitted earlier this month that the strategy of setting up several large garrisons in Chechnya had proved ineffective against guerilla tactics. He said troops would now leave their bases to deploy in small contingents across Chechnya to limit the rebels' freedom of movement. However, analysts said the new tactics would expose smaller groups of Russian soldiers to the militants night-time strikes and increase Russian losses.

Even a pro-Russian Chechen leader admitted last week that Russian forces were unable to crush rebels.

The war can go on for 10 or even 20 years more, said Mr. Akhmad Kadyrov, a Chechen religious leader appointed by Moscow to run the war-shattered republic in June. Only we, the Chechens, can stop this war, not Russian weapons and bombs, he said, adding that the population of the republic did not trust the Russians.

THE HINDU

25 DEC 2000

# Russia inching back to W. Asia scene

By Kesava Menon *Ramesh*

**MANAMA (BAHRAIN), NOV. 25.** After a decade during which they have largely been absent from the West Asian scene, except for sporadic forays, the Russians are now steadily pushing their way back into the region.

While the Russians had not allowed their linkages to Iraq to atrophy in this period, they are now re-energising their involvement with other aspects of the West Asian situation including the peace negotiations and the strategic affairs of the Persian Gulf. Official efforts are paralleled by the extremely vigorous enterprise being displayed in these parts by private individuals from the states of the erstwhile Soviet Union.

Russia's latest effort to end the isolation of Iraq has come in the form of a call to Kuwait to end its support for the "no-fly" zones that the U.S. has unilaterally imposed on sectors in northern and southern Iraq. Kuwait has provided the U.S. Air Force with bases from which they can operate aircraft that patrol the zones to prevent Iraq from carrying out military flights. For most of the last decade, the U.S. was also able to prevent or severely restrict even civilian flights in these zones. But Russia has led a whole list of nations that have defied the U.S. ban and flown civilian aircraft, thinly disguised as humanitarian missions, into Baghdad over the last two months. At the time Russia had insisted, in contradiction of the U.S. position, that they did not require prior permission from the U.N. committee supervising sanctions the anti-Iraq sanctions to operate these flights. Since then Russia has become more vocal in rejecting the validity of the U.S. ban.

It is not clear whether Russian diplomacy had a major role to play but the Organisation of the Islamic Conference at its recent summit also declared its opposition to the imposition of the "no-fly" zones.

This declaration was anomalous since two prominent OIC members, Saudi Arabia and Kuwait, provide the U.S. with the bases from which they enforce the zone. It is unlikely that these two Gulf states will heed the Russian request especially since the U.S. Defence Secretary, Mr. William Cohen, has ruled out any change in the policy.

Besides chipping away at the sanctions policy vis a vis Iraq, the Russians have also begun to show keener interest in fulfilling their role as the co-sponsors of the peace negotiations between Israel and the Palestinians. For most the past decade, Russia has done little to challenge the U.S. monopoly over the mediation efforts. But they have parleyed between the Israelis and Palestinians since the outbreak of violent confrontation from Sept. 28. The Palestinians, supported by other Arab states, have shown some eagerness to have Russia on board an expanded mediation team.

Despite having linkages in the Gulf region that were diametrically different from that which the U.S. has, Russia had refrained from playing the great power game that the Soviet Union played. Russia did not join the "dual containment" policy of the U.S. but its linkages to Iraq and Iran were conditioned more by economic considerations with the strategic dimensions being played down considerably.

However, the Russian Foreign Minister, Mr. Igor Ivanov, enunciated a new strategic perspective during his recent visit to Saudi Arabia. Calling for a new system to prevent

conflict in the region, he proposed that a first step be made by establishing criteria for determining the "reasonable levels of troops and armed forces" that each country in the region would be allowed to retain given its defence capabilities.

"In other words, matters must be pursued to create a regional system of security and co-operation which will allow us to avoid a repetition of wars and conflicts in this strategically important region", Mr. Ivanov said. This is not going as far as Iran which wants regional security to be maintained exclusively through regional co-operation and without any U.S. input. But in placing the emphasis on regional security, Russia has moved at least half way to the Iranian position.

After the Russian President, Mr. Vladimir Putin's visit to India this year, an analyst in one of India's leading English dailies had written about how Russia was now a "has been" power. Russia is no doubt going through an extremely difficult time and it is possible that it will be a lengthy period of time before that country overcomes the difficulties. But people make up a nation. Nobody who has seen the level of enterprise that individual Russians, and others from the former Soviet Union, display in these parts would be in a hurry to write them off. In West Asia, Russians are disparagingly spoken of as being heavily involved in crime and prostitution. But Russians are slowly marking their presence in other areas of economic activity, especially in re-export of consumer durables and other goods. What they do display is a ferocious work ethic and a ruthlessness in the pursuit of their interests. A nation made up of such people just cannot be written off.

THE HINDU

26 NOV 2000

## Blair, Putin to hold 'mini-summit'

By Hasan Suroor

LONDON, NOV. 19. The British Prime Minister, Mr. Tony Blair, who put off his visit to Russia earlier this month due to domestic compulsions, would travel to Moscow tomorrow for what is being described here as a "mini-summit" with the President, Mr. Vladimir Putin.

This would be their fifth meeting this year but there is no specific agenda beyond a review of bilateral relations. One commentator called it a part of Britain's "long-term investment" in Russia.

Mr. Blair is credited with creating a special relationship with

Russia, and Russian officials are quoted as admitting that they are surprised by the effort which he has put in to the enterprise. "We cannot remember a time when Anglo-Russian relations were better", an official told *The Times*.

This, it is pointed, despite the fact that Britain and Russia continue to be on different wavelengths on a host of issues, particularly relating to the Balkans. Some of Mr. Putin's domestic policies such as the crackdown on the media and his handling of the Kursk disaster have attracted criticism here, but Mr. Blair has not allowed that to detract him from his efforts to sustain his interest in Moscow.

Mr. Putin is seen as someone who is likely to dominate Russian politics for sometime, and therefore, worth cultivating even if in the short-term there are no visible gains. To some extent, this has already paid off with Moscow demonstrating a greater willingness to listen to Britain rather than France or Germany.

In fact, it is increasingly beginning to see London as a "vital bridge" to America and the European Union, according to an analyst. Moscow-sceptics, however, think that Mr. Blair is overdoing the act, given the volatile nature of Russian politics and Mr. Putin's own unpredictability.

THE HINDU

20 NOV 2000

## Putin hints at autonomy for Chechnya

HO-17  
2/11 by Vladimir Radyuhin

**MOSCOW, NOV. 20.** In a dramatic softening of his hardline stand on Chechnya, the Russian President, Mr. Vladimir Putin, has indicated willingness to consider broad autonomy for the rebel region, but only after all rebels have been wiped out.

"Today, Chechnya's formal status is not that important," he told a gathering of the country's top military officials in Moscow. "What is important is that this territory should never again be used as a springboard for future attacks against Russia."

Until now, Mr. Putin insisted that Chechnya was a litmus test for Russia's ability to preserve its territorial integrity. It was on the slogan of rooting out separatism that Moscow launched a second military operation against Chechen rebels in October 1999. The popular war was instrumental in propelling Mr. Putin to presidency last March, but public support for the campaign has since declined and continuing bloodshed in Chechnya has created foreign policy problems for Russia.

Monday's statement could be a sign that Mr. Putin was looking for a way out of the military impasse in Chechnya. Addressing the military top brass, Mr. Putin called for winding up the Chechnya campaign.

"Long months go by, people are suffering and it is necessary to bring the anti-terrorism operation to an end," the President said, adding that Russia's enemies were out to "plunge Russia into a bloody quagmire of permanent regional conflicts."

Mr. Putin said the future status of Chechnya would only be resolved "through political means", but at the same time, customarily called for wiping out Chechen rebels.

"Our most important goal is to completely eliminate the rebel units and their bases," he said. "The counter-terrorist operation must be carried out until the end."

THE HINDU

21 NOV 2000

# Russia, Belarus to have single currency

By Vladimir Radyuhin

MOSCOW, NOV. 14. Russia and Belarus have agreed to make the Russian rouble the currency of their planned Union State in five years, giving the clearest signal yet that the two countries are resolved to move towards integrating their economies.

The agreement, initialled by the Prime Ministers of Russia and Belarus at a meeting in Moscow on Tuesday, will be signed by the Presidents of the two countries on November 30. Under the accord, the Russian rouble will become the sole cash currency in Belarus as of January 1, 2005. It also envisages that from 2008 the two States will have another unified currency, the name of which is yet to be specified. The breakthrough decision to use the rouble as a common currency became possible after Belarus dropped its demand to have the right to print

money and agreed that until 2008 the Russian Central Bank will be a single emission centre, while the issues of monetary policies will be decided by a joint council.

The common currency accord shows that Belarus may be finally ready to embark on a market reform of its State-controlled economy to pave the way to setting up a Union State with Russia in line with a bilateral treaty signed in December 1999. As a first step towards catching up with Russian economic reforms, Belarus last month unified its different currency exchange rates. It has also agreed to adopt a unified legislation and a single tax policy with Russia. To support market reforms in Belarus Russia will give it a \$100-million stabilisation credit, the Russian Prime Minister, Mr. Mikhail Kasyanov, announced after Tuesday's meeting with his Belarussian counterpart.

THE PRESS

15 NOV 2000



The mother ship Regalia stationed at the site where the Russian submarine Kursk sank, in preparation for the recovery on Friday. British, Scandinavian and Russian divers arrived at the site and began preparations for recovering the remains of its crewmen. — AP

## Kursk recovery begins

By Vladimir Radyuhin

MOSCOW, Oct. 21. Deep-sea divers have begun preparations for retrieving the bodies of the crew trapped inside the sunken Russian nuclear submarine Kursk amid reports that destructions inside the vessel are too massive to undertake the risky operation.

The Kursk sank in the Arctic Barents Sea on August 12 after two mysterious explosions ripped through the ship killing all the 118 crewmen on board. An international team of divers from Russia and Norway arrived on the site of Russia's worst submarine disaster on Friday aboard the Norwegian off-shore platform Regalia. After a mini-sub explored the site of the wrecked submarine lying on the seabed at the depth of 108 metres, divers went down to cut holes in the 150-metre-long submarine hull. Some seven holes measuring 0.6 by one metre are expected to be cut before divers will try to enter the sunken submarine.

The Russian navy commander, Admiral Vladimir Kuroyedov, who is personally in charge of the operation, warned the divers not to take risks. Last week he said the recovery attempt would be called off if it was felt the submarine's condition made it too risky to

search for bodies inside. Divers could face grave danger from jagged metal debris inside the wreck that could puncture their survival suits. Under a contract with the Norwegian oil firm Halliburton, only Russian divers are to go inside the Kursk. The operation could also be halted if weather conditions deteriorate and waves exceed six metres.

Many experts have warned against undertaking the risky operation. They argued that most bodies were destroyed or thrown out of the submarine in the powerful blast and the few remaining corpses would be impossible to retrieve from the mangled hull. The Russian President, Mr. Vladimir Putin, pledged to retrieve the bodies in an emotional meeting with relatives in August, but many have since urged him not to rush the operation. In an open letter to the President last month, victims' relatives urged him not to risk divers' lives and wait till preparations had been made for raising the submarine with the crew. The Government said such an operation would be undertaken next year. Some marine experts have cautioned that the holes to be made for retrieving the bodies could weaken the submarine's

structure, jeopardise the safety of the Kursk's nuclear reactors and make it impossible to raise the vessel.

A Russian daily on Saturday quoted naval sources as saying that Government officials responsible for the salvage project were just afraid to tell Mr. Putin the truth about the Kursk condition, which transpired after a Russian unmanned mini-sub filmed the submarine last month. According to the sources the film, which was never made public, revealed that the Kursk's five front sections had been totally destroyed, suggesting that the remaining four had been too damaged inside to try to penetrate them.

The cause of the explosions that destroyed the Russian submarine is yet to be established. The Russian mini-sub which explored the seabed around the Kursk failed to find any fragments of an alien vessel to support the collision theory, favoured by a government commission investigating the disaster. Several specialists said the available evidence suggested that a misfiring torpedo engine caused the first blast aboard the submarine which touched off a fire, flooding and a catastrophic detonation of warheads on board.

THE HINDU

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REUTERS

*Russia*  
*509/10*  
MOSCOW, Oct. 24. — Russian and Norwegian divers today resumed efforts to cut their way into the submarine *Kursk*, a navy spokesman said, after storms had halted operation to recover the remains of 118 sailors.

"At 9 a.m.(local time), the divers went down and began to prepare the equipment for the operation," a spokesman for the Northern Fleet told Reuters by telephone.

The improved weather in the Barents sea

should hold until tomorrow night at the site of Russia's worst submarine disaster, the spokesman said. Penetrating the reinforced inner hull of the 154-metre (505-foot) submarine is the toughest challenge facing the divers at this stage, working in the intense cold and darkness of Arctic waters.

The divers had cut a fifth of the hole they needed to make to enter the vessel yesterday, and that the work would take at least 15 hours, the spokesman said.

An attempt to resume work earlier today had been abandoned after the *Regalia* plat-

form, operated by the Norwegian arm of US Oil services firm Halliburton, had trouble stabilising in high winds.

The divers had also started cutting a new hole in the *Kursk* hull to penetrate into another compartment where it is believed some sailors were posted at the time of blasts.

The divers have to pierce seven holes in all to reach all the parts of the submarine.

Navy commander Admiral Vladimir Kuroyedov has instructed divers not to attempt anything dangerous.

THE STATESMAN

25 OCT 2000

# Divers retrieve four bodies from Kursk as operation continues

AGENCIES

MURMANSK (RUSSIA), OCT 26

RUSSIAN divers raised a fourth body from the Kursk submarine early today as work to recover the remains of the 118 sailors who died in the tragedy resumed despite heavy seas and gusty winds.

On Wednesday, Russian divers recovered the first three bodies after managing to navigate the pitch dark of the craft in their bulky suits. Navy officials

said all four bodies remained in a special capsule aboard the Regalia diving platform and had not yet been brought back to shore by helicopter because of fierce winds and a heavy fog over the Barents Sea.

Sources said President Vladimir Putin was due Sunday to attend a last-rights ceremony that has been tentatively scheduled in the Northern Fleet's base in Severomorsk. The fourth Kursk corpse was discovered overnight during a search of the eighth and ninth compartments of the crippled craft, lying 108 metres under the Barents Sea.

Passing through a freshly cut hole in the hull, the diver moved six metres into the vessel's flooded eighth compartment before the length of his airline prevented him

going further. At that stage he did not report seeing any bodies, although seven sailors would have been in the section at the time of the accident, fleet spokesman Vladimir Navrotsky told interfax.

The hatch into the lower deck of the rear of the 155-metre-long vessel was found to be tightly shut. The diver was also unable to fully open the hatch into the ninth and last section of the submarine because of an obstruction on the other side.

The first access hole was completed this morning but the Russian and Norwegian teams then took several hours to clear debris from inside the opening with the aid of a scouting camera, and to establish that radiation levels were normal.

Working at a depth of over 100 metres, precautions taken during the hazardous operation included masking the sharp edges of the hole to prevent damage to airlines and diving suits.

"If the operation supervisors feel that entering deeper into the section is life-threatening, then the work must be stopped immediately," Russian navy commander-in-chief Vladimir Kuroyedov said after arriving on the Norwegian support ship Regalia for the start of the salvage operation.

## SUB TRAGEDY

# Chandrika orders probe into Tamil massacre

UNITED NEWS OF INDIA

COLOMBO, OCT 26

A HIGH-LEVEL probe ordered by President Chandrika Kumaratunga began today at the Bandarawela Rehabilitation Camp in central Sri Lanka where 25 Tamil detainees were massacred in one of the worst tragedies.

The Bindunuwewa camp was allegedly attacked by villagers early yesterday killing 25 detainees and injuring 16 others. The victims were some 40 Tamils in the age group of 18 to 34 who had surrendered to the army during the last two years.

On hearing of the incident, Kumaratunga despatched two teams of high-ranking police officials to the spot to conduct a thorough investigation.

Condemning the 'unfortunate' incident, she said the government had taken all precautions not to ensure that such incidents did not recur in any of the camps.

Police said at the time of attack there were 40 detainees in the camp. On Tuesday night, some of the detainees attacked the camp officer compelling the officers to call the police.

Later, the villagers stormed the camp and attacked the inmates. Police have arrested more than 200 villagers in the investigations so far, even as the slaughter was widely condemned.



AT A GLANCE

INDIAN EXPRESS

27 OCT 2000

# Chilling facts about the Kursk tragedy

Moscow, October 27

**MAYHEM ERUPTED** aboard Kursk while it sank as a fire swept through the doomed craft and sailors were pelted with falling debris from all sides, the Navy revealed today.

As the first details of what happened on August 12 as the Kursk plunged to the bottom of the Barents Sea were being pieced together, fierce storms again delayed operations to salvage the crew's bodies.

The nation was already mourning the grim discovery yesterday that at least some of the 118-man crew survived the initial accident for a number of hours, and did not die instantly in a massive explosion as officials had earlier said.

Today, a top navy spokesman disclosed that some of the bodies recovered from the Kursk so far showed signs of severe burns, indicating that a fire had engulfed the submarine.

Others were battered beyond recognition, Northern Fleet spokesman Vladimir Navrotsky told the RIA Novosti news agency.

Among the four corpses already recovered, "there were charred (bodies), and those that were heavily deformed from suffering blows from sharp and blunt objects," Navrotsky said.

"It seems that as everything was falling apart, they were hit both in the head and in the body."

Navrotsky's comments marked

the first time that Russian officials have revealed that a serious fire had swept through the Kursk, the country's most modern nuclear submarine.

It remained unclear from the report where or how the fire started.

The four bodies were found in the rear of the craft, to which at least 23 sailors stationed in the boat's mid-section fled, according to a note discovered on the body

## Actress' donation

BRITISH ACTRESS Vanessa Redgrave plans to travel to Moscow next week to meet family members of the 118 sailors who perished in the Kursk submarine disaster, the Itar-Tass news agency reported on Friday

The international star of stage and screen will also be offering a donation collected in London to the mourning families, the artistic director of the Sovremennik theatre Ggalina Volchek told the agency. (AFP)

of one of the recovered sailors, Dmitry Kolesnikov.

Two strong blasts are believed to have sunk the craft.

As a result of Kolesnikov's note, written in the dark over a period of 100 minutes, divers aboard Norway's Regalia diving platform were devising plans on how to enter the rear ninth section after abandoning efforts to go inside

other parts of the submarine.

Russian news reports said the ninth compartment's narrow passageways posed the chief danger for salvage workers and their bulky diving suits.

Efforts to cut open more holes in the Kursk's hull or work inside the sunken craft were interrupted yesterday due to deteriorating weather conditions.

Weather forecasts further pointed that heavy winds, snow and five-metre (15-foot) waves would buffet the Barents Sea for several days to come, making all recovery operations impossible.

ITAR-TASS meanwhile reported that the stormy weather made communication between workers on the Regalia and other members of the rescue team in the region difficult.

Kolesnikov's note was the first direct testimony to reach the outside world of conditions aboard the Kursk moments after the disaster, a tragedy which kept Russians glued to their television screens.

And Moscow newspapers today reminded the nation that government officials had said that all rescue efforts were destined to end in failure because most of the crew died in the first minutes after the initial blasts.

"They were alive," screamed a banner headline to the Noviy Izvestia daily. "In Kursk's ninth section, they could not wait for help long enough," said the Sevodnya daily. (AFP)

**Authorities lied to us that they were all dead'**

THE MOTHER of 19-year-old Aleksei Nekrasov, the youngest sailor to die aboard the Kursk, was angry with officials for keeping Russia in the dark after the disaster.

"As soon as I heard about the note I knew that Lt Capt Dmitry Kolesnikov was Aleksei's commander, so he should have been alongside him," Mr Nadezhda Nekrasova said over telephone.

"They were alive. They lied to us that they had all died. They were alive and they were waiting for help."

Other relatives insisted yesterday that all the bodies should have remained with their entombed comrades until the entire wreck could be retrieved.

Their pleas echoed those from relatives before the salvage operation began — to leave the bodies until the whole submarine could be raised.

"I still believe even now they should have raised the boat itself together with the whole crew. It would have been much easier for everyone because it has been an enormous tragedy," Lt Capt Kolesnikov's mother Irina told reporters in St Petersburg.

Lt Capt Kolesnikov's wife agreed too. (Reuters)

THE HINDUSTAN TIMES

28 OCT 2000

# Russia, allies to set up joint force

12/10 By Vladimir Radyuhin HD-16

MOSCOW, Oct. 11. Russia and five former Soviet republics have vowed to repulse any aggression against Central Asian states and resolved to form a joint military force for the purpose.

"Any attempts to violate the territorial integrity of the Central Asian member-states of the [Collective Security] Treaty will be resolutely dealt with by our joint efforts," the Presidents of Russia, Kazakstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Belarus and Armenia said in a statement approved at a one-day summit of the Collective Security Council of the Commonwealth of Independent States on Wednesday.

The meeting was held in Bishkek, capital of Kyrgyzstan, which together with Uzbekistan fell victim to Islamic insurgencies last summer. However, Uzbekistan, which is trying to negotiate security guarantees with the Taliban, was conspicuously absent from the summit. Earlier this year, it refused to renew its participation in the collective security pact. The six leaders approved a blueprint for building new defence structures against mil-

itant Islamic movements in Central Asia. Under the plan, they will set up a joint military force, modelled after the Eurocorps recently formed in Europe. In peacetime national units of the corps will undergo training in their countries, ready to be rushed to any member-state at its request to deal with a possible insurgency or aggression. Military analysts estimated the strength of the joint force at 70,000 to 80,000 troops.

Russia and its allies made it clear their military preparations were in response to a recent string of military victories by Afghanistan's ruling Taliban movement, which they accused of fomenting unrest in the region.

The conflict in Afghanistan is the main source of instability, the six post-Soviet leaders said in their joint statement. They also voiced concern over the growth of international terrorism and extremism in Central Asia, which "poses an immediate threat to the security of the countries in the region and entails a long-term destabilisation of the situation."

The statement calls for a special meeting of

the U.N. Security Council to work out concrete steps to resolve the problem of Afghanistan with the participation of all sides. "We call on the U.N., OSCE (Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe) and the world community to support efforts by the member-states of the Collective Security Treaty in combating international terrorism and extremism and embark on elaboration of coordinated practical measures aimed at averting this global threat."

The Russian Security Council Secretary, Mr. Sergei Ivanov, who accompanied the President, Mr. Vladimir Putin, to Bishkek, ruled out any preventive strikes against the Taliban. He said the main emphasis was being put on political and diplomatic measures, but stated that the military should be ready to repulse intruders if they cross into Tajikistan.

Russian news agencies quoted the Defence Minister, Marshal Igor Sergeev, who also attended the security summit that while Russia was trying to resolve all issues by political means, it will resolutely rebuff any attempt by the Taliban to push into Tajikistan.

# The new Russian foreign policy

By C. Raja Mohan

**MOSCOW, SEPT. 30.** As the Russian President, Mr. Vladimir Putin, and the Prime Minister, Mr. Atal Behari Vajpayee, get ready to declare a strategic partnership between Russia and India next week in New Delhi, it might be necessary for both the leaders to have a frank exchange of views on the objectives and goals of their foreign policies. It would be a mistake to take even one's best friends for granted.

The efforts of the two leaders to revive the old warmth in a dramatically changed international environment could easily be hampered by needless mutual suspicion. The Indian desire for an alliance with the United States and the latest Russian moves for an entente with Pakistan have the potential to disturb the traditional calm of Indo-Russian ties. The Russian foreign policy establishment is carefully evaluating the political results from two summit meetings be-

tween India and the U.S. in less than six months this year. Will India's new interest in the U.S. reduce its traditional enthusiasm for Russia?

The extraordinary bonhomie between India and the U.S. and the talk of a natural alliance between New Delhi and Moscow do raise some questions here. The foreign policy specialists here are

## Russia Today — III

carefully reviewing the direction of India's relations with the U.S. and their impact on India's ties with Russia. Similarly the Indian Foreign Office must be poring over the dynamics of the recent interaction between Russia and Pakistan.

At the public level, both sides do say their relations with third parties will have no impact on very high quality of Indo-Russian relations. But privately there will be

new concerns in both capitals. There is far too much at stake for India and Russia in their bilateral relationship to let misunderstandings come in the way of forging an intensive political partnership in the new millennium. As they look around for new friends in a changing world, both Moscow and New Delhi know they have not had before or unlikely to have in future a partner more reliable than the other.

Openness, transparency and intensive communication are the best means available to India and Russia to reassure each other about their diplomatic initiatives towards third countries of concern. As the Indian and Russian societies undergo rapid change, their world views cannot and will not remain the same. There are new elites rising in both sides that are not part of the traditional framework of Indo-Russian cooperation. And there is not enough appreciation in both countries about the profound changes that are taking place in the other. The time is now to promote sustained and productive interaction between the foreign policy elites as well as the civil societies in the two nations.

Few have mourned the disappearance of the Soviet Union more than the Indian elite. As Indo-Russian relations drifted apart under the former President, Mr. Boris Yeltsin, there was a strong yearning within the Indian foreign policy community for a powerful leader in the Kremlin who will reclaim Russia's lost glory in world affairs. Mr. Putin has answered their prayers. He has proclaimed his desire to build a strong state in Russia and pursue a vigorous foreign policy. But few in India have expected that one of the first diplomatic initiatives of Mr. Putin would be towards Pakistan. It is high time that India stops romanticising Russia and devotes greater intellectual resources to understand the new direction, which that important nation is embarked upon.

Restoring the greatness of Russia is one of the central foreign policy themes of Mr. Putin. He is convinced that the natural attributes of Russia will ensure its return as great power on the world scene. But Mr. Putin is also absolutely realistic in assessing the pre-

sent condition of Russia and the severe constraints he has inherited from the collapsed communist state and the wanton chaos unleashed by his predecessor, Mr. Yeltsin. India must prepare itself for a more assertive and at the same time a pragmatic foreign policy from Mr. Putin.

The central objective of Mr. Putin's foreign policy is to facilitate the rapid economic development of Russia. The new external activism of Russia is not about launching a new ideological or geopolitical crusade. He is balancing the determined pursuit of Russian interests with the imperative of catching up with the West on the social and economic front. While Mr. Putin's stepped up rhetoric against the U.S. reflects the deep and intensified anti-Western resentment within Russia, his actual policies have been well modulated. For example on the issue of national missile defence which has exercised the Russian mind, Mr. Putin has left himself enough political room for a compromise with the U.S.

Second, the band of extreme realists that Mr. Putin has brought to Kremlin recognises that the oversized and unwieldy military instruments it had inherited are not going to restore Russia's greatness. It appreciates the enormous shortage of resources in dealing with the new security challenges faced by Russia as well as sustaining external military commitments in Central Asia and the Caucasus. An active diplomacy, then, that protects Russia's interests without committing too many military resources has become a high priority for Mr. Putin.

Many Russian interests in Central Asia, Caucasus, and in Chechnya — have come into sharp focus in Pakistan and Afghanistan from where terrorism and extremism are radiating into the Russian and post-Soviet space. With the Taliban appearing to move towards victory, Russia had to seriously consider engagement of Islamabad as a serious option to deal with its security challenges. Besides exchanging views on their core foreign policy concepts, Mr. Putin and Mr. Vajpayee need to think of some decisive common actions to deal with the developments in Afghanistan that imperil their common interests.

THE HINDU

1 OCT 2000

# PUTIN'S NEW FOREIGN POLICY CONCEPTS

51-6 1/10 By ROY MEDVEDEV

IN autumn 1999 and then in the first months of this year Vladimir Putin held many meetings in the White House and Kremlin with politicians from different countries. However, these were, as a rule, not summit meetings but the study of the situation in Russia and acquaintance with its new leader was their aim. This is only natural, as both a change of a political regime and a change of political generations took place in Russia.

After Putin officially took over as President of the Russian Federation, he began to play a more active role in the sphere of foreign policy. In May, he had meetings with almost all the leaders of the CIS countries. Russia no longer set forth any global and, especially, ideological tasks of a superpower. The new concept was a concept of a multipolar system of international relations, which objectively reflected the many-faceted character of the modern world.

At the same time, Russia's position was determined not as one of European nations but as a great Eurasian power responsible for the maintenance of security in the world both at the global and at the regional level. According to its new foreign policy concept, as a permanent member of the UN Security Council, Russia exercises substantial influence on the formation of a new world order. Putin emphasised the need for its offensive, not defensive, translation into life and vigorous activities to protect the national interests of Russia.

Shortly after his meetings and talks with Clinton in Moscow, the main subject of which was the new American project for the deployment of a national ABM system (the project in which huge money was already invested but which was not supported probably anywhere in the world, besides the US), President Putin made his first visits to Western Europe — first to Italy and then to Spain and Germany. Putin met leaders, public personalities and businessmen of these countries, participated in cultural events and was received by the Pope in Vatican.

The countries which Putin visited do not belong to the "nuclear club", even though they are Nato members. These countries have serious apprehensions concerning the US plans of a limited national ABM system but they showed an obvious interest in Putin's proposal. As professional diplomats said, Putin launched an attack from the flanks on the American project by drawing non-nuclear countries into the discussion of the main problems of European security.

## EASTERN STAGE

European leaders saw Putin as a persistent, confident and competent politician who largely differs from his predecessor in behaviour and style of negotiations. He was not arrogant but he did not use cheap tricks to win the sympathy of leaders of other countries.

The Western press and television, which paid much attention to Putin in January, March and May, wrote and spoke very little about him in June, though they could have a closer look at him. His press conferences and meetings were practically not front-paged by any newspaper and were not among the main items of the electronic media. Some commentators linked this indifference of the Western mass media to the events in Chechnya or the "Gusinsky case". But the war in Chechnya began a long time ago. As for Gusinsky, the West did not pay much attention to it. Participation in the meeting of the Shanghai Group of Five in Dushanbe was the beginning

of the "eastern stage" of his diplomatic activity. In his remarks at the meeting, Putin said that Russia would not only preserve but also increase its military presence in Tajikistan. The Shanghai Group of Five supported the position of Beijing on the Taiwan problem and Russia's "just actions in the Chechen republic". They demonstrated the ability to shape a new security model, which differs from the alliances and blocs of the Cold War period. Few could deny the importance of stability in that region in the general context of stable international relations. It was decided to rename the Shanghai Group of Five into the Shanghai Forum. Uzbekistan joined this organisation.

## CHINA TRIP

Putin began his Far Eastern tour on 18 July with negotiations in Beijing. Western papers wrote that his Chinese visit produced no surprises and was conducted in the "active manner", which is typical of Putin. As was to be expected, Russian and Chinese leaders not only signed the joint Beijing Declaration but also made a special statement against the US attempts to deploy a "limited" national ABM system. Considering that the attitude to the American plans is also more than lukewarm in Western Europe and Japan, there is reason to say that it was impossible for the Clinton Administration to ignore the Russian-Chinese statement. Chinese and Russian leaders agreed on cooperation in several large economic projects, the expansion of the sales of Russian defence industry products to China and the growth of trans-border trade.

Very important was the general atmosphere of Putin's meeting with Jiang Zemin. They demonstrated friendliness, as well as a good disposition, mutual understanding and respect, which were absent from Russian-Chinese meetings for the past several decades.

The successful meetings in Beijing prepared the ground for Putin's visit to North Korea. The press of different countries called it a breakthrough. Neither Russian nor Soviet leaders have ever visited Pyongyang. The same is true of leaders of Western countries. The most important result of the Pyongyang negotiations was the decision announced by the Korean leader Kim Jong-il to give up independent nuclear research if more industrialised nations help his country conduct the launching of communications and space research satellites. The satellites can be launched from the territory of other countries. Describing his meetings in Pyongyang, Putin said that Kim Jong-il, whom he invited to Russia, comes across as a well-informed modern politician and that Russia and North Korea can expand economic cooperation.

Putin arrived in Okinawa from Blagoveshchensk on 21 July and did not participate in the first working meeting of the other leaders. However, after dinner he had an hour-long meeting with President Clinton and told him about his visits to Beijing and Pyon-gyang. By and large, Clinton was pleased. He had forced himself into a corner by his earlier remarks that the US would make the decision about the national ABM system in August. But he was unable to persuade either his allies or his opponents that the project, which would violate nuclear-missile stability, was expedient. What is more, the very first tests of the "star weapon" were unsuccessful and the entire first stage of the system proved to be too costly and unreliable. Clinton was able to postpone the final decision without "losing face". Putin was admitted to this club of the heads of state with enthusiasm

# Russo-Japanese island dispute still to be solved but ties improve

By Harvey Stockwin  
The Times of India News Service

HONG KONG: Russian President Vladimir Putin arrived in Tokyo on Sunday to a cordial welcome by Japanese Prime Minister Yoshiro Mori even though the diplomatic indications are that the two nations will now fail to sign a peace treaty, formally concluding World War II, by the end of the 20th Century.

However, modest and even significant agreements could result from Mr Putin's three-day visit as the two nations try to broadly improve relations rather than concentrating upon resolving the vexed territorial dispute between them.

The goal of concluding a peace treaty before the end of the year 2000 — which now seems unlikely to be met — was originally set by former Russian President Boris Yeltsin and former Prime Minister Ryutaro Hashimoto. The former Soviet Union and Japan normalised post-war ties in 1956 with a joint declaration but, because of the territorial dispute, a peace treaty has never been negotiated, let alone signed.

In the closing days of World War II, the Soviet Union grabbed, and then annexed, the islands of Kunashiri, Etorofu, Shikotan and the Habomai islets just north of Hokkaido, which had always been part of Japan ever since Russia and Japan first agreed on their sea border in a 1855 treaty. Japan has refused to accept this annexation, and continues to do so. Theoretically, at a time when Russia clearly does not possess the resources to develop the four islands right on Japan's doorstep, and has many more pressing calls on its limited finances, it should be easier for Russia to agree to the retrocession of what the Japanese see as their Northern Territories.

The Japanese would be willing to pay many billions of dollars for the retrocession, money which could be used to ease Russia's acute budgetary crunch. But at a time when a strong undercurrent of assertive nationalism lies just beneath the surface of Russian politics, uneasily combined with deep feelings of nationalist frustration, it seems most unlikely that Mr Putin could make any such move, coming so soon after the fi-

asco surrounding the sinking of the Russian nuclear submarine Kursk weakened his political position.

Reports from Moscow, in fact, say that Mr Putin asserted that the islands would not be returned to Japan before leaving Moscow. However, rather than leaving relations drifting along at stalemate, it appears that the two nations are yet making an effort to widen and deepen relations, rather than holding ties hostage to the territorial dispute. In written answers to Russia's Itar-Tass news agency, Mr Mori suggested that "the problem of a peace treaty with Russia must no longer remain a symbol of confrontation", and added that "relations between Japan, Russia, the United States and China are key to peace and prosperity in the Asia-Pacific region in the 21st Century".

In line with this strategic sentiment, Russo-Japanese high level meetings are becoming more frequent. This is the third time Mr Mori has met Mr Putin this year, having himself made his first foreign visit to Moscow, before Mr Putin came to the Group of Eight meeting in Okinawa. Most interestingly, reports in the Japanese press indicate that Japan may become the first major nation to offer further assistance in the denuclearisation of the 100 or so decommissioned nuclear submarines lying at anchor around the Kola Peninsula, and also in the Russian Far East, a problem highlighted at the time of the Kursk disaster. Japan worries over reports that the Russians have carelessly dumped nuclear reactors from old submarines in the Sea of Japan.

Former Prime Minister Keizo Obuchi pledged \$200 million to help clean up Russian nuclear facilities and Mr Mori will evidently offer to extend this assistance. Intriguingly, another pact which come out of this summit will concern joint economic activities in the Kurile Islands, which could include Japanese aid in developing the Northern Territories. Other economic agreements are expected to be signed during Mr Putin's visit.

On Monday, Mr Putin and his wife will have lunch with Emperor Akihito and Empress Michiko — another sign of the Japanese effort to improve ties.



Yoshiro Mori

Vladimir Putin

THE TIMES OF INDIA

5 SEP 2000



# Enough proof that Kursk was hit by a Nato submarine'

Fred Weir  
Moscow, September 5

PROOF THAT the atomic submarine Kursk was sunk last month after being struck by a foreign submarine has been discovered on the seabed near the site of Russia's worst post-Soviet naval disaster, a military spokesman has said.

General Valery Manilov, deputy chief of Russia's General Staff, told a press conference in Moscow that searchers have found equipment and hull fragments from a US or British submarine some 50 metres from the wreckage of the Kursk, which went down August 12 with the loss of 118 men.

Gen. Manilov said the evidence is "presently being guarded by ships of the Northern Fleet," and may soon be produced in public.

Russian military chiefs have repeatedly claimed that the Kursk, an ultra-modern attack sub, sank after being rammed by one of the NATO submarines that routinely shadow Russian fleet maneuvers.

Despite widespread skepticism, Russian defence experts insist there is strong evidence that the Kursk was destroyed in a collision. In addition to pieces of a foreign submarine lying nearby they say there is a hole in the submarine's side with its edges bent inward, indicating a strike by an external object.

Last week the US government leaked a very different story to the press. According to that version the USS Memphis, which was on station at the time of the accident, overheard two explosions inside the Kursk.

American experts concluded that a torpedo exploded during a test-firing, leading to a second massive explosion in the Kursk's weapon's stores.

Meanwhile, radiation levels remain normal in the Barents sea, where the shell of the doomed Russian nuclear submarine Kursk is now lodged on the seabed, Russian authorities announced, an AFP report said.

THE HINDUSTAN TIMES

5 SEP 2000

# Mori, Putin remain divided on Kuriles

By F.J. Khergamvala

**TOKYO, SEPT. 5.** The visiting Russian President, Mr. Vladimir Putin and his functional host, Mr. Yoshiro Mori both embarked today for the Millennium Summit in New York, which appears to be more welcoming turf as Japan and Russia find themselves agreeing more on world issues than on how to deal with a bilateral dispute.

At the conclusion of two days of talks, both made headway on international issues, trade and defence exchanges but remained apart, expectedly, on the territorial dispute that divides them and has stood in the way of a peace treaty. A plethora of documents and agreements on cultural, humanitarian, police cooperation, debt relief, maritime cooperation, disarmament and non-proliferation and such issues were signed by the two leaders to add content that would suggest, especially to China, that there is more to the Russo-Japan equation than a quarrel over the jurisdiction over four islands to the north of Japan.

Not even the surprise gift of a Sony robot that Mr. Mori passed across the table to the taciturn and very fit looking visitor from Moscow charmed Mr. Putin enough to agree to any concessions on the islands of Shikotan, Habomai, Kunashiri and Etorofu. Ms. Lyudmila Putin's stunning appearance in a kimono sent photographers wild but did not soften Mr. Mori's public posture on the disputed islands. Called Kuriles by Russia and Northern Territories by Japan, these were seized by Soviet forces near the end of World War II.

For domestic reasons, Mr. Mori could not publicly agree to a change in the Krasnoyarsk

Agreement of "striving to reach a peace treaty by 2000." As *Asahi Shimbun* put it gently "Mori, Putin to continue talking." It was fairly obvious from a statement issued by both countries that creative ideas will be required to resolve this impasse. The statement reflected Japan's position to "continue efforts to realise the Krasnoyarsk Agreement of a peace treaty and settlement of the dispute by 2000," but the real operative part was that "the two leaders instructed their respective representatives in the joint committee 'to come up with new strategies to accelerate further the tasks of the joint committee on concluding the peace treaty and the committee on setting an international boundary.'"

Mr. Mori got his way that the boundary dispute and the peace treaty cannot be delinked and rejected an earlier Russian suggestion to go for an interim "friendship treaty." Mr. Mori also rejected any impression conveyed by officials accompanying Mr. Putin that the ownership of the four islands could be equally apportioned. A reference by Mr. Putin to the Moscow Declaration of 1956, the first by a Russian leader, had been inferred in Tokyo as a hint that Moscow may be willing to agree to discussing a "two each" solution. In the end, Mr. Putin was content that he too had not given ground and from the statement issued, Mr. Mori too could claim likewise. The Japanese public know that no settlement is possible this year.

Japan was earlier nervous about the Chinese President repeatedly telling Mr. Yeltsin about Tokyo not being a suitable candidate for permanent membership of the U.N. Security Council. Mr. Mori can claim success at getting

the new Russian leader to support Japan's candidature, even if a statement is not a legally binding document. Japan committed itself to support Russia's bid to join the World Trade Organisation. These are part of a document on "Strategic and geopolitical importance of Japan-Russia ties." It was in this context, a senior official of the Japanese Foreign Ministry, talking to reporters, said Mr. Mori told Mr. Putin about his visit to South Asia, "especially the ties with India to broaden our multi-faceted cooperation to a global partnership into the 21st century."

On the day Mr. Putin left Moscow, his Government announced that five Japanese corporations and a Japanese consortium had been awarded a variety of contracts. This was presumably Russia's downpayment to Japan to both, apply balm to Japanese businesses upset by a failed hotel joint venture and to attract Japanese majors to build an "energy bridge" by exploiting the Siberian Far East's natural gas resources and to invest in a Siberian railway. Overall though, Mr. Mori reminded Mr. Putin that Japanese business did not think highly about Russia as an investment destination or as a recipient of commercial loans.

But, Russia is a promising defence partner, especially after Moscow agreed to train Japanese pilots in 1998 on the capabilities of Sukhoi aircraft that Russia sold to China. Much will be heard in the weeks to come on defence exchanges. The Russian Defence Minister, Mr. Igor Sergeev comes to Tokyo in November. A Japanese naval vessel will go to the Kamchatka peninsula for the first time. Japan agreed to expand aid to Russia on dealing with decommissioned nuclear submarines.

THE

SEP 10 1999

# Russia to resume arms sales to Libya

By Vladimir Radyuhin

**MOSCOW, AUG. 1.** Russia and Libya have agreed to revive their wide-ranging defence ties suspended during the years of international sanctions imposed on Libya in connection with the 1988 bombing of a Pan Am airliner.

Speaking after talks with the Libyan Foreign Minister, Mr. Abdel Rahman Shalgam, the first Libyan dignitary to visit post-Soviet Russia, the Russian Deputy Prime Minister in charge of the defence industry, Mr. Ilya Klebanov, said Russia would take part in the modernisation of Libya's military hardware, up to 80 per cent of which is of Russian origin.

"Libya has identified priorities for our military-technical cooperation," Mr. Klebanov was quoted as telling the Interfax news agency on Monday. "These include above all the maintenance and upgrading of air defences and armour."

During his three-day visit to Russia, which ended on Tuesday, the Libyan Foreign Minister was received by the Russian President, Mr. Vladimir Putin, and held detailed talks with the Russian Foreign Minister, Mr. Igor Ivanov. The Russian leader accepted an invitation to visit Libya and for his part invited the Libyan leader, Mr. Muammar Gadhafi, to come to Moscow.

The resumption of bilateral contacts was made possible by the suspension of U.N. sanctions

against Libya last year after it handed over two men suspected of the Pan Am bombing. At his meeting with Mr. Shalgam on Monday, Mr. Putin was quoted as calling for "a final lifting of sanctions against Libya."

The unfreezing of defence ties with Libya came on the heels of Mr. Putin's historic visit to North Korea last month and top-level talks in Moscow with the Iraqi Deputy Prime Minister, Mr. Tariq Aziz, last week.

Analysts said Moscow was seeking to redress an imbalance in the strategic lineup of forces that emerged after the breakup of the Soviet Union by forging closer ties with countries labelled by the U.S. as "sponsors of terrorism." Kremlin sources said Mr. Putin would visit Cuba next month on his way to the U.N. millennium summit.

Mr. Klebanov, said several groups of Russian military experts were currently in Libya to assess its defence needs. Defence commentators named three possible thrust areas of Libya's defence purchases in Russia air defence systems, including the S-300 anti-missile complexes and MIG-31 long-range interceptor fighters, Kilo-class submarines and surface warships equipped to fight ship-launched cruise missiles, and land-forces armaments, including multiple-rocket launchers, latest tanks and Iskander tactical missiles.

THE HINDU

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# Russian N-sub breaks down at bottom of sea

Moscow, August 14

HF-14 15/8

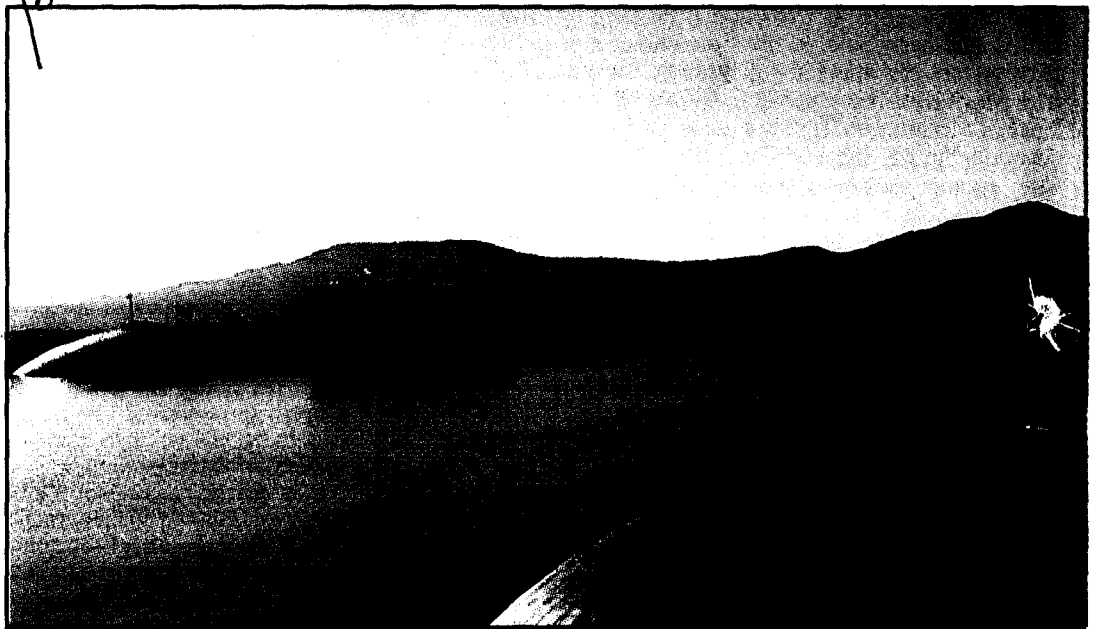
A RUSSIAN nuclear-powered submarine has broken down at the bottom of the Barents Sea and is starting to flood, putting in peril the lives of 120 soldiers on board, news reports said Monday.

The Kursk, one of the most modern vessels in the Russia Navy, shut down the main nuclear reactor propelling its engines early Sunday, hours after it took part in military exercises organized by the Northern Fleet.

Sea water began to flood into the submarine's front through hatches used to store torpedoes, NTV television reported citing military sources. ORT television said the submarine went down some 100 km (60 miles) north of the Russian port of Severomorsk, east of Norway.

Reports said the vessel had to shut down all of its electricity and may be slowly running out of air.

It has been located and surrounded by three other submarines and five military ships, NTV said. The submarine was not carrying any nuclear weapons and radiation levels remained normal, said a navy press spokesman.



A file picture of Oscar-class (Antey) nuclear submarine at a harbour of Kamchatka peninsula, Russian nuclear submarine base. Photo: AP

An Oscar-class vessel under NATO specifications, it came into service in 1995 and has the capacity to function for 120 days at depths of up to 500 meters (1,650 feet), the agency said. The

Russian navy has been carrying out regular naval manoeuvres despite the financial crisis that the country's military has faced since the fall of the Soviet Union in 1991. (AFP)

THE HINDUSTAN TIMES

15 AUG 2000

Russia  
(W)

## Evacuation of Russian n-submarine crew begins

HD-1

16/8

**MOSCOW, AUG. 15.** Rescue workers began evacuating 116 sailors trapped in a nuclear-powered submarine, Kursk, at the bottom of the Barents Sea after a let-up in Arctic storms this afternoon, the Russian Defence Minister, Mr. Igor Sergeyev, was quoted as saying. But the Navy Commander, Admiral Vladimir Kuroyedov, was quoted as saying the rescue would not be likely to begin full-force before nightfall.

The Russian Government reported that the 155-metre-long Antey class submarine (NATO classification Oscar-II) had gone down on Sunday during the Northern Fleet's military manoeuvres about 180 km northeast of the Russian port of Murmansk in the Arctic circle. It was not carrying nuclear weapons and radiation levels in the area were normal, a navy spokesman said.

After water poured on board, the Kursk was unable to surface. It came to rest on the seabed after its two nuclear reactors were shut down, cutting off light to the crew and leading to fears it would run out of oxygen.

Interfax news agency quoted Mr. Sergeyev as saying severe storms, which had hampered rescue attempts since Monday, had eased after noon on

Tuesday. It was not clear whether there were casualties among the crew.

Mr. Sergeyev did not explain how the evacuation would be carried out. The cause of the disaster was not known, but the two most likely theories were a collision with an unknown object or an explosion on board.

The Russian Deputy Prime Minister, Mr. Ilya Klebanov, said the submarine may have run into a mine from the World War II. CNN television quoted Pentagon officials in the United States as saying that a U.S. submarine monitoring the exercises reported an explosion in the area on Saturday.

The Russian navy had suggested that the Kursk had crashed into another vessel, perhaps foreign. "There are signs of a major and serious collision," Admiral Kuroyedov told Itar-Tass. The Pentagon quickly dismissed this, stressing there was "no indication that a U.S. vessel was involved in this mishap." Designers of the submarine said there was probably enough oxygen left aboard to last between two to three days. The military has sent all available ships, submarines, submersibles and aircraft to the site. — Reuters, DPA, AFP

THE HINDU

16 AUG 2000

# Signals heard from submarine crew

*Russia*  
*17/8*  
**MOSCOW, AUG. 16.** The survivors of the crew of the Russian nuclear Submarine Kursk were heard banging on the hull of the stricken vessel in the Barents Sea today after almost a day of silence, navy officials said.

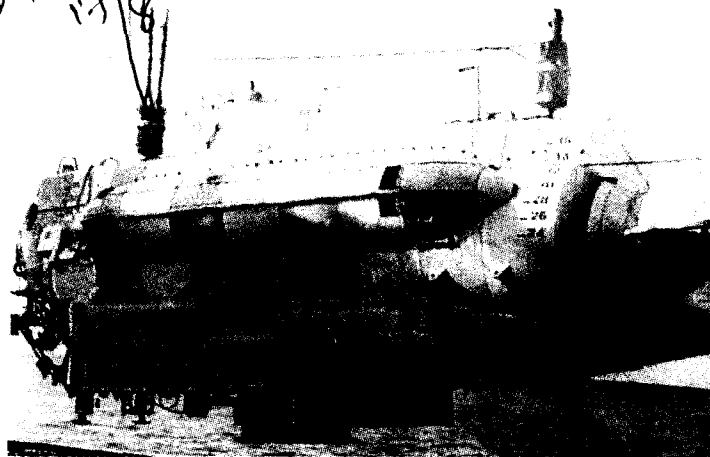
"We are hearing signals so there is still hope of saving them," the deputy head of the navy general staff, Vice Admiral Vladislav Ilyin, was quoted by Itar-tass news agency as saying.

Acoustic contact was lost with the submarine at some time during Tuesday night or early today morning, prompting fears that oxygen supplies had finally run out on the explosion-damaged vessel. — DPA

**Vladimir Radyuhin** reports:

Earlier, Russian officials admitted that chances of rescuing the sailors were dwindling rapidly, as repeated attempts to dock a rescue capsule with the submarine failed.

Rescuers have been trying to dock a bell-shaped capsule since late Tuesday to the submarine, but strong underwater currents and a difficult angle at which the submarine is lying on the seabed foiled the efforts. On Wednesday morning, the naval command said a bigger and newer rescue vessel had been sent down in renewed attempts to dock with the submarine. However, later a naval



**A file photo of the Bester submarine, used in the rescue operation on the grounded Russian nuclear submarine, Kursk, in the Barents Sea. — Reuters**

spokesman in Moscow reported no progress, blaming deteriorated weather and zero visibility on the seabed.

Naval officials said they still had no clue as to what had happened to the submarine, whether any crew members had been killed or wounded or what the situation onboard was. Oxygen for the vessel's crewmen was expected to last just two more days, but it was not clear whether the sailors could survive that long, considering that they had no heating and the water temperature on the sea floor was just 4 degrees above zero Centigrade. The Kursk subma-

rine, the biggest and newest in the Russian Navy, has been lying on the sea floor at a depth of 106 metres since Saturday after it sank during naval exercises off the Russian coast in the Barents Sea. The Russian President, Mr. Vladimir Putin, described the situation as 'critical' after the naval command announced that 16-hour-long rescue efforts had been hampered by bad weather.

Mr. Putin denied speculations that the naval command had been slow in launching the rescue operation. "The rescue operation began immediately after the accident; not a minute was wasted.

Everything possible is being done to save the crew and the submarine," he said in televised remarks in Sochi, on the Black Sea, where he is on a short holiday.

The failure of their own rescue efforts appears to have forced Russians to accept Western offers of help. Admiral Kuroyedov despatched on Wednesday his deputy to NATO headquarters in Brussels to discuss British and American offers of help. The NTV television reported that Moscow had sent a Russian transport jumbo jet on Wednesday afternoon to pick up a British rescue vessel.

If all efforts to lift the crew with the help of a rescue capsule fail, attempts could be made to raise the submarine using giant pontoons. Another proposal calls for raising the submarine to a vertical position so that part of it protruded from the water.

## Clinton reiterates help

Reuters reports from Washington:

U.S. President, Mr. Bill Clinton, reiterated to Mr. Putin today that the U.S. stood ready to help Moscow with a stricken submarine, a White House official said.

The official, speaking on condition of anonymity, said Mr. Clinton, in a phone conversation with Mr. Putin, expressed his concern about the situation with the submarine and "reiterated our offer to help in any way the Russians deem appropriate."

THE HINDU

17 AUG 2000

# 61 crew members feared dead

*HD-1 18/8*  
*Kursk (1)*  
**MOSCOW, AUG. 17.** As rescue efforts intensified to salvage the crippled Russian submarine lying at the sea-bed for the last six days, reports suggested that its captain and 60 of the 116 seamen are feared dead. Commander Lanchin and 60 officers and sailors of Kursk are feared to have died soon after the disaster during exercises in the Barents Sea on Saturday, according to Radio Mayak.

It said Cmdr. Lanchin and the 60 seamen were believed to be in the first two compartments of the submarine which was badly damaged.

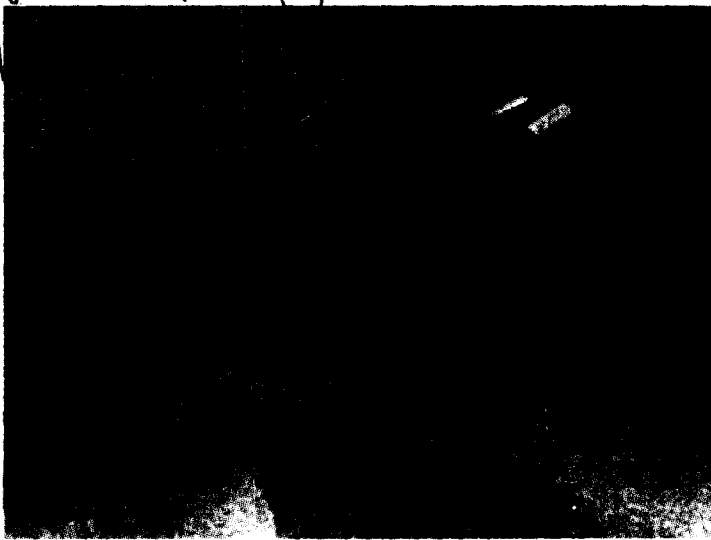
#### Vladimir Radyuhin reports:

Hopes of rescuing any of the crew members are fading fast, as the sailors are running out of oxygen and are fighting near-freezing temperatures.

The Russian Prime Minister, Mr. Mikhail Kasyanov, described the situation aboard the submarine as "close to catastrophic" amid reports that bad weather and strong underwater currents had foiled all attempts by four Russian rescue capsules working in turns to dock with the damaged vessel lying at a depth of 106 metres.

Navy officials said there were no signs of life on the vessel, with tapping on the hull not detected since early Wednesday. Yet, officials insisted some crew members could still be alive but were too weak to move. The Navy raised the number aboard the Kursk to 118 from 116 without explanation today.

Underwater films showed massive damage to the nose and conning tower prompting suggestions that four front sections, which normally house 70 per cent of the crew, were filled



**A computer-generated image of the back of the Russian nuclear submarine tilted by pontoons to the surface. The use of pontoons will bring the rear cargo hatch of the crippled Kursk closer to the surface, but this is becoming impossible as the flooded craft is very heavy. — AP**

with water. "The accident happened so quickly we can say it was like a flash," said the Navy's chief spokesman, Capt. Igor Dygalo. "The internal escape capsule in the conning tower must have also been damaged making it impossible for the crew to use it."

The cause of the accident was still not known, but the Russian Defence Minister, Marshal Igor Sergeev, said it must have been a collision with another vessel. "We have irrefutable evidence that the submarine hit an unknown object," he said.

Admiral Eduard Baltin, former commander of a nuclear submarine division, said the Kursk may have rammed a large cargo ship as it was surfacing.

But U.S. and British experts

said the Russian submarine must have suffered two explosions inside the vessel. The Kursk can carry up to 28 torpedoes and anti-submarine missiles, each with warheads weighing up to 1,000 pounds.

A Norwegian ship carrying a British mini-rescue submarine sailed from Trondheim port on Thursday to where the Kursk was stranded, after the Russian President, Mr. Vladimir Putin, ordered the Navy to accept any foreign help that was offered. Norway is also sending divers to assist in the rescue operation.

The Russian Navy's deputy chief of staff, Capt. Vladislav Ilyin, arrived in Brussels on Thursday for consultations on possible NATO involvement in rescue efforts.

THE HINDU

18 AUG 2000

# Russians pin hopes on British-Norwegian teams

Fred Weir  
Moscow, August 18

BRITISH AND Norwegian specialists are expected to join forces on Saturday with Russian rescue workers struggling to reach the stranded Kursk, though hopes for the safety of the sub's 118 crewmen are dwindling fast.

An emergency meeting of a special government commission on the disaster on Thursday night produced a grim picture of the accident that struck the Kursk during war games in the Barents Sea a week ago.

After reviewing film of the sunken submarine, lying 108 metre below the frothing Arctic Sea, the commission concluded the damage was massive and devastating, perhaps resulting from a collision with some "huge object" some 20 meter below the surface.

Deputy Prime Minister Ilya Khlebnov, head of the commission, said the submarine was "practically destroyed" from its bow to the conning tower on its mid-section. In addition, there is a "terrifying hole" on the sub's starboard side.

"A rather big part of the crew was in the part of the ship that was hit by the catastrophe that developed at lightning speed," Mr Khlebnov said. On Monday naval officials said the Kursk's crew had signalled they were all "alive and well" by Morse code tapping on the ship's hull. But Mr Khlebnov said: "There have been no sounds for quite a long time" from within the grounded vessel.

Another fear is that any survivors might be running out of oxygen, or facing poisoning from excessive build-up of carbonic acid in the sub's stagnant atmosphere. Russian naval officials have estimated that oxygen supplies should be used up on the ship by this weekend, but the crew could extend them by sitting completely motionless and making no sounds.

## CIA chief arrives

THE HEAD of the US Central intelligence agency was in Moscow on Friday, a spokesman for Russia's FSB domestic security service said. It was not clear whether George Tenet's visit was in any way connected with the crisis over Russian Kursk nuclear submarine. The spokesman contacted by telephone declined to give any details. Interfax news agency described it as an "CIAAL visit". The US embassy could not immediately be reached for comment. **Reuters, Moscow**

The Russian Press has reported that the Kursk may have left behind emergency equipment for filtering and restoring its air supply when it shipped out from its base at Severomorsk to take part in the Barents Sea military exercises a week ago.

"They were only supposed to be at sea for three days, quite close to their home base," the daily Segodnya quoted a military expert as saying. "They left the emergency oxygen accumulators to be repaired, since the Kursk was to be sent on a long patrol in the Mediterranean shortly".

Around-the-clock efforts by two Russian submersible rescue vehicles have failed to link up with the Kursk or to contact any surviving crew members. A task force of 22 Russian warships and emergency vessels are reportedly on station, about 135-km north of Severomorsk.

Hopes were being pinned on a specialized British mini-submarine, the LR-5, which is



The wife and daughter of a Russian sailor from the crippled submarine Kursk, accompanied by a naval officer, walk to a car that would take them from the train station in the northern port of Murmansk to a closed military base on Friday. Photo: AP

expected to arrive on the scene on Saturday. A team of British and Russian experts, preparing the operation, are reportedly optimistic that the British vehicle can lock onto the Kursk's emergency hatches.

A group of Norwegian Arctic salvage divers, who normally work on oil rigs, are also reportedly on their way to the accident site. A British naval official told journalists that LR-5 has conducted successful exercises in the past with Soviet-built submarines from the Polish fleet, and it is believed the hatches on the Kursk are of similar design.

According to reports from Paris, the head of the committee of mothers of Russian soldiers in Chechnya has said that President Vladimir Putin showed "overwhelming arrogance" by not accepting western aid more quickly to help save the 118 crew members. "Just like in Chechnya, the Kursk drama shows once again that human life has no value in the eyes of our military, and even less so in the eyes of our politicians," Valentina Melnikova said in an interview published on Friday in the French daily *Aujourd'hui le parisien*.



# Rescue capsule touches Kursk, that's all

REUTERS  
MURMANSK, RUSSIA, AUG 18

A rescue capsule briefly hooked up with the stricken Russian submarine Kursk on Friday but failed to dock properly and had to resurface in an emergency because its batteries had run out, state television said.

This was the closest contact made so far in increasingly desperate attempts to reach the Kursk and its crew of 118, who have been stranded on the seabed in the Arctic waters off the north of Murmansk since the weekend with dwindling oxygen supplies.

"There were attempts to dock with the submarine and at one moment during the night or rather very early in the morning, the capsule hooked up with the submarine," said a correspondent for RTR television from a rescue boat on the Barents Sea.

But he said the body of the submarine at the hatch was damaged and although the capsule, one of four taking part, could hook up with the submarine it failed to deploy a safety corridor around the hatch which could enable the crew to climb out.

"The capsule used almost all its energy and surfaced in an emergency," he said.

Russian and Western newspapers, expressing a public mood of helplessness and outrage, have openly accused the authorities of neglecting their duties while men were in peril.

British and Norwegian rescue teams were racing to reach the Kursk, which has been gradually sinking into the sandy bed of the Barents Sea since Saturday.

"There is only one hope left for British help," wrote the *Nezavisimaya Gazeta* newspaper, adding to the media chorus of anger and contempt over Russia's own failure to rescue its men.

The ship carrying a British mini-sub was due to reach the site



Russian sailors look out of the gates of a military base in Severomorsk as they wait for any news of the sunken nuclear-powered Kursk submarine - AFP

at 6 p.m. (1400 GMT) on Saturday, a Russian Navy spokesman said, while Norwegian deep water divers were expected seven hours later.

President Putin has spoken publicly only once - five days after the crisis began - and his disengaged approach has shocked Russian and world media.

"The behaviour of our president is immoral," said Boris Nemtsov, head of the reformist parliamentary group which had backed Putin in the presidential election.

LOST looks, pale faces and tears marked out the relatives of Russia's stranded submariners in the crowd from a plane that arrived on Thursday in this Arctic Port city from Saint Petersburg.

The families were swiftly taken away to the closed village of Vidiyeyvo, some 80 km from Murmansk, and away from the pack of journalists baying for more information on those trapped on the seabed.

The village on the Barents Sea is already filled with the wives, mothers and children of the Kursk's crew, slowly despairing about the fate of the 118 men trapped more than 100 metres below the icy waves.

"I think today we can count the survivors on our fingers, too

# Subs here to stay despite the accident

REUTERS  
WASHINGTON, AUG 18

THE sinking of the Russian-attack submarine will not dampen military and political enthusiasm among nations to send such weapons to sea. The Cold War is over, but defence experts stress that quiet and deadly undersea boats are here to stay in growing numbers.

Twenty-eight countries already own nuclear-powered or diesel submarines and a half-dozen others are known to be seeking the stealthy craft that, like sharks, have for decades struck fear in military mariners on the surface.

Questions arise about the continued need for "boomer" subs that are more than 550 feet (165 meters) in length and carry long-range nuclear missiles.

At the same time, missions are growing for smaller attack boats, from gathering intelligence to launching conventional and nuclear cruise missiles and transporting elite troops to alien shores.

"I don't see in any way that this accident challenges the requirement for subs," said Paul Beaver, an analyst with Jane's Information Group in London, as Russia pressed efforts to save the nuclear submarine Kursk's crew days after it sank to the bottom of the Barents Sea. "We don't see every time a car crashes that we ought to abandon cars. Militarily and politically, subs are wonderful weapons," Beaver said on Thursday, adding that the requirement for them will grow, not shrink.

# Life has no value for politicians: relatives

much time has been wasted since Saturday," when the nuclear submarine sank, said one former frigate captain from Russia's Northern Fleet, Vadim Sendik. Decrying the government's reluctance to accept foreign help, Sendik said: "Our fleet unfortunately did not learn the lessons of the Komsomolets accident," a reference to a Soviet submarine in which 42 men died in 1989.

At the control post at the entrance to Vidiyeyvo, soldiers barred the way to journalists. Access to the Northern Fleet's nearby base at Severomorsk has also been denied.

Some 200 journalists have poured into Murmansk over the last few days.

Agence France Presse



Relatives of the trapped Kursk submariners cry as they arrive in Murmansk on Thursday - AFP

TUESDAY, AUGUST 22, 2000

## THE SUBMARINE TRAGEDY

AD-12  
MS

THE FADING AWAY of all hopes about the possibility of rescuing any one from the Kursk, the Russian nuclear submarine which had sunk into the sea off the Arctic Circles, is a grim reminder of the utter helplessness to which the world's navies are reduced when such a disaster strikes without warning. The achievement of science and technology which has gone into the building of submarines could be seen from its being wholly protected against the inflow of water when it sails below the surface of the sea. Such a remarkable invention was in fact foreseen by Jules Verne, long before the submarine had become a reality, in his *Twenty Thousand Leagues Under The Sea*. The latest disaster to the Kursk is a warning that nothing should be taken for granted and things could go wrong long after the building and the sailing of submarines have become just matters of routine.

The investigation into the sinking of the Kursk should reveal the causes which led to the catastrophe. If, as it is believed, it was brought about by its collision with an underwater object, presumably another submarine, it is very unfortunate that the Kursk could not detect the latter's presence well in time. If this is what had happened, it should by now have come to light with the news of the other submarine having been either damaged or sunk along with the Kursk. The enquiry into the disaster will have to explore what other "underwater objects" could have been hit by the ill-fated Kursk. The other horrifying possibilities which have been mentioned in this connection are the explosion of the two tonnes of TNT stored inside the submarine and the torpedoes it was carrying. They raise a few disturbing questions about whether during peacetime submarines should be packed with cargo of the kind which could be put to use only when nations are at war. If it is regarded necessary even during peace time to test the torpedo firing capabilities of submarines, was it not possible for them to have dummy versions of the

same instead of the live ones fraught with danger of the kind to which the Kursk was exposed? The grimness of the tragedy could be seen from the impossibility of any rescue operations reaching the air pockets inside the submarine which could continue to sustain lives until they run out. With the Kursk having sunk into the sea, the question of its being rescued by another submarine docking with it does not arise. The tragedy calls for a closer look at matters hinging upon the designing of the submarines of the future to make them safer. A thorough investigation should throw light on how the submarine had become so vulnerable to be flooded by water as this should have been ruled out by the technology which had gone into it.

The Kursk in fact joins a few other Russian submarines which had met with a similar fate. The radiation equipment of another submarine, K-19, which was launched in 1961 very much against the warnings of the Soviet Commander N. Chernavin that it was not safely constructed became uncontrollable when it was a hundred miles away from a Norwegian Island. K-3 was the other Soviet submarine which was destroyed in a fatal fire when it was six hundred miles away from Newfoundland in 1972. The message from the latest Kursk tragedy is that nuclear submarine technology is still far from being fully grasped. It will be worthwhile to draw attention in this connection to the heavy toll which the German submarines had taken immediately after the outbreak of the Second World War when they torpedoed ships of the British Royal Navy almost every day. The German submarines remained wholly invulnerable for a while until radar, a British invention, made their detection and eventual destruction possible, beginning with the historic sinking of the elusive Grafspiee. The nuclear submarine incorporating a much later technology seems to be a teaser for the Russian Navy.

THE HINDU

22 AUG 2000

# All aboard Russian sub dead

By Vladimir Radyuhin

401 228  
MOSCOW, AUG. 21. Ten days after the Russian nuclear submarine, Kursk, sank in the Barents Sea, an international rescue operation was called off after Norwegian divers said there were no survivors on board. The divers drew this conclusion on Monday after they finally succeeded in opening the escape hatch in the ship's rear to find the ninth compartment filled with water, Russian television said. Norwegian rescuers said the submarine was completely flooded and none of its 118 crew alive. They pressed the Russian side to call off the rescue operation, RTR television said.

(According to a Reuters report, the Interfax news agency quoted the head of the Northern Fleet, Commander Vyacheslav Popov, as confirming that all crew members were dead and the vessel completely flooded. This was the first official confirmation of the death of the crew.)

Earlier, Russian authorities said the operation should continue as there was still hope some sailors could be alive in the sixth, seventh and eighth compartments. The chief spokesperson of the Northern Fleet said that hope could not be discarded until all compartments were examined. Rescuers were now examining the ninth compartment with the help of remote-controlled camera. RTR television said a body of a sailor was found near the hatch and that a remote-controlled manipulator would try and retrieve it.

A British rescue mini-submarine that rushed to the site was never deployed after divers felt it could be of little help. Officials said the emphasis now

would be on recovering the sailors' bodies and that Moscow had asked Norwegian divers to help in the task. The Russian President, Mr. Vladimir Putin, on Monday tripled funds for the victims' kin to an amount equal to \$ 54,000. Psychologists are also being sent to the Kursk's base at Vedyaevo on the Barents Sea to help counsel the sailors' relatives.

Plan to recover n-reactors: Page 14

THE HINDU

22 AUG 2000

# How Russia hid the truth about Kursk

David Hearst  
London, August 22

HC-12  
22/8

**SATURDAY, AUGUST 12,**  
10.31 am: Two explosions in forward torpedo compartment of the Kursk.

11.20 pm: Kursk fails to make radio contact with command. Search starts.

■ Sunday, August 13, 3 am: Kursk found on seabed. Navy receives pictures showing scale of damage.

The commander of the northern fleet, Admiral Vyacheslav Popov, declares to the Russian media that the exercises were a perfect success.

■ Monday, August 14, 0.30 am: Interfax and RIA Novosti, quoting sources at Navy HQ in Moscow, report that a submarine is on the seabed due to "technical problems".

The Navy denies that the Kursk is flooded and says there is no damage to the hull. Sonar sweeps of area report sounds, interpreted as survivors tapping hull with metal objects.

It is claimed that the crew made a controlled descent, that "liaison with the submarine is established", and the crew had time to shut down the twin reactors.

In fact, the Kursk flooded and

sank like a stone after two explosions in the forward torpedo compartment. Communication was never established with the crew.

Officials say they are lowering a diving bell to supply Kursk with electric power and oxygen. Russia rejects offers of help from Britain, Norway and the US. The Russian Navy had neither the diving bell, nor the deep-sea divers.

Rescuers did nothing except film the site.

■ Tuesday, August 15: Storm begins. A spokesman for the Russian Navy again claims oxygen is being supplied to the Kursk. A hotline is established for relatives, but the Navy refuses to name the crew. The Russian mini-submarine is not as advanced as those offered by the US and Britain. The only divers Russia sent down were equipped with light diving gear, and went down at grave risk to themselves. Six almost perished in a collision with surface ship.

■ Wednesday, August 16: Storm in Barents Sea abates. After a conversation with US President Bill Clinton, Russian President Vladimir Putin orders Naval chiefs to accept foreign aid, but only offers from Norway and Britain are accepted. A Navy Deputy Chief of Staff says the crew is still signalling by tapping on the hull.

Officials later say that the last sound from the vessel came on Monday.

■ Friday, August 18: Russian newspaper publishes complete list of those on board, but only after paying a \$660 bribe. Mr Putin says accepting foreign aid earlier would have made no difference because foul weather would have interfered with the rescue.

Western diving experts said strong underwater currents would have made little difference to their operation.

■ Saturday, August 19: Hours before the arrival of a British submersible and its Norwegian mothership, officials say damage to the vessel is massive, and that most of the crew died within minutes of the explosions.

Sunday, August 20: Russian Deputy Prime Minister Ilya Klebanov says Norwegian divers have discovered the hatch will have to be torn off with a hauser. He also claims a man may be trapped in the escape hatch.

Norway denies the existence of the trapped man, and says its divers reached no such conclusion about opening the outer hatch. They eventually open both the outer and inner hatches relatively easily.

(Guardian News Service)

THE HINDUSTAN TIMES

23 AUG 2000

29/8

**KURSK TRAGEDY / FAMILIES' HOPES STILL ALIVE**

# Sailors' kin grill Putin

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20 119-11

By Vladimir Radyuhin

**MOSCOW, AUG. 23.** Angry relatives of the crew of the Russian nuclear submarine Kursk which sank in the Barents Sea rebelled against the Kremlin's decision to hold a day of mourning on Wednesday for the 118 sailors declared dead and demanded that the rescue operation be resumed.

Hundreds of the sailors' families who gathered in the northern naval base of Vidyayevvo poured their wrath on the Russian President, Mr. Vladimir Putin, when he met them on Tuesday night. They demanded that mourn-

ing be postponed until all sections of the sunken submarine had been thoroughly searched for possible survivors and the dead bodies had been retrieved.

"When will we get them back, dead or alive? Answer as the President," shouted a woman in the crowd, referring to the bodies of the sailors, in short clips on state-owned RTR television.

Mr. Putin, dressed in black and looking sombre, confronted the sailors' relatives in an unprecedented six-hour meeting closed to all media except state-owned television. Witness-

es said the meeting was extremely heated and emotional, with the families voicing their indignation at what they called was a botched rescue operation. "We do not believe our children are dead and we do not want any mourning until new efforts have been made to rescue them," a crying woman told NTV television after meeting the President.

The Interfax news agency said Mr. Putin had answered all of the relatives' questions and promised them all bodies from the Kursk would be recovered once Norwegian divers readied necessary equipment. He acknowledged the North Sea Fleet's rescue service was in a poor state but added that no commanders would be punished unless their guilt had been proved.

Mr. Putin decreed official mourning after Norwegian divers had opened an escape hatch on the Kursk on Sunday and found the entire submarine was flooded. Bowing to the families' demands, he cancelled a planned ceremony of paying last respects to the Kursk crew at the site of the catastrophe and returned to Moscow.

Wives and mothers of the sailors feared mourning would mean no further efforts would be made to recover the bodies. Mourning ceremonies were called off in Vedyayevvo, but elsewhere in Russia flags flew at half-staff on Wednesday, candles were lit in Churches and entertainment programmes were cancelled.

NTV television said the sailors' families were going to sue the Government for failing to provide full and truthful information about the disaster during the 10-day rescue ordeal.

NTV on Wednesday reported that radiation levels on the coast near the site where the Kursk went down had doubled overnight. But later the channel cited the joint Russian-Norwegian environmental group, Bellona, as saying such variations are normal and harmless. The group said there were absolutely no signs of any radiation from the sunken submarine.



The Russian President, Mr. Vladimir Putin (left), shakes hands with an unidentified relative of one of the sailors aboard the nuclear submarine Kursk, in the closed military base of Vedyayevvo, 80 km north from Murmansk on Tuesday. Mrs. Irina Lyachin (center), is the wife of Gennady Lyachin, the captain of Kursk. — AP

THE HINDU

24 AUG 2000

KURSK TRAGEDY / GOVT. TO AWAIT PROBE REPORT

# Putin refuses to accept resignations

H9-16  
25/8

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By Vladimir Radyuhin

MOSCOW, AUG. 24. Russia's military top brass have offered to resign over the Kursk submarine disaster but will retain their jobs until an official investigation into the causes of the tragedy has been carried out.

The Russian President, Mr. Vladimir Putin, said he had received offers of resignation from the Defence Minister, the Navy Chief and the Commander of the Northern Fleet, but had decided not to accept them for the moment. "If anybody is to blame, he will have to be punished, without any doubt. But we must get a clear picture of the causes of this tragedy and the manner in which the rescue operation was carried out," Mr. Putin said in a television interview on Wednesday night.

In his first detailed public comment on the sinking of the submarine, in which 118 sailors had died, Mr. Putin accepted responsibility for what had happened. "Despite the fact that I've been in this job in the Kremlin for little over 100 days, I bear a feeling of full responsibility and a feeling of guilt for this tragedy," he said. The statement was in stark contrast with the posture of callous indifference typical of Soviet leaders in similar circumstances. "Words are not enough, they are hard to find. I feel like wailing," the clearly shaken President said.

Mr. Putin has been under fire for failing to react promptly to the disaster and waiting for two days before accepting international offers of help for the rescue of the Kursk crew. It was only on the 10th day after the catastrophe that Norwegian divers opened the submarine's escape hatch and declared all sailors dead.

However, Mr. Putin managed to somewhat reduce the damage to his image by flying to the northern naval base of Vidyayevovo on Tuesday to confront the angry families of the dead sailors. In his Wednesday interview to the state-owned RTR television, Mr. Putin sought to reaffirm strong support for the armed forces, one of his main power bases.



Relatives of the seamen of the sunken Russian submarine Kursk leave the Voronezh nuclear submarine after an excursion at a naval base in Vidyayevovo on Wednesday. The navy brought the relatives to the site so that they could see the place where the seamen had worked and died. — AP

"There will be no groundless mass reprisals under the influence of wild swings of emotion and under the influence of circumstances," he said. "I will be with the army, with the navy and with the people. And together we will rebuild the army, the navy, and the country."

A survey conducted after the Kursk disaster showed Mr. Putin's approval rating had dropped to 65 percent from the record 73 last month, but the President remained by far the most popular leader in Russia.

The sailors' relatives headed out into the Arctic Barents Sea on Thursday to lay flowers on the waves above the Kursk, after attending an emotional laying of a foundation stone for a memorial to the sunken submarine. The ceremony, in which the President had been expected to take part, had been planned for Wednesday, but was cancelled at the demand of the relatives who clung to the hope that some sailors could still be alive inside the wreck lying at 108 metres below the surface.

AFP reports:

A Norwegian engineering group

is in talks with Russian authorities over the possibility of raising the sector of the sunken submarine that contains its nuclear reactors, the firm said on Thursday.

Global Tool Management is assessing the feasibility of separating the rear section of the flooded vessel which houses the two reactors with remote-controlled cutters, and then raising it onto a barge, said Mr. Harald Ramfjord, one of the company's directors.

"We think it would be fruitless to try to float the entire submarine to the surface, as it is damaged and full of water," he said.

"Several attempts in the past to raise submarines have shown that they break apart, and trying to repair the ship at the site would be extremely costly for the Russians," he added.

"If the reactors are dry and are not leaking radioactivity, we could raise them to the surface using a crane on a barge," Mr. Ramfjord said. "In the opposite scenario, if the reactors are leaking, we could encase them in cement and transport them out to sea, dropping them at a depth of 2,000 metres."

THE HINDU

25 AUG 2000

# Vladimir Putin rejects Western charge over Kursk tragedy

Sumit 26/8  
9-178

MOSCOW: President Vladimir Putin has refuted the Western charge that his country did not request assistance in time for rescuing sailors trapped aboard the nuclear submarine Kursk, reports *Novosti* quoting excerpts from his televised address to the nation.



Vladimir Putin

"It took Norwegian divers full six days to reach the wrecked ship's hatch," he said on Thursday night. Mr Putin indirectly referred to the uninterrupted degradation of the armed forces. Though in power for a very small period, the President is ready to answer for the 15 years during which the defence forces have been degrading.

Former Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev said that the submarine disaster would not affect the profound faith Russians had in their President. But Mr Gorbachev also demanded complete information concerning the tragedy which, he felt, had not been provided to Mr Putin. "Don't draw rash conclusions," warned famous Russian submariner admiral Vladimir Chernavin while talking to Russian government daily *Rossiskaya Gazeta*. He presented three possibilities.

The catastrophe may have been caused by a collision with a surface vessel or another submarine in the Barents Sea. It could have been the result of major seal failure. Third, the ill-fated sub might have made a quick dive to evade danger and hit the seafloor. (PTI)

THE TIMES OF INDIA

26 AUG 2000

# Russia readies reply to US missile test

MICHAEL EVANS  
THE TIMES, LONDON

MOSCOW, July 8. — Russia is believed to be preparing to test launch its new mobile SS27 intercontinental ballistic missile.

American intelligence agencies are reportedly monitoring activities at a base on the Kamchatka peninsula. Japan too is keeping close watch on a possible missile test, according to the Jane's Information Group. The Kamchatka peninsula is about 500 miles from Japan.

Any test of a Russian ICBM would be seen as a deliberately timed move by Moscow to coincide with USA's test flight of its prototype anti-missile defence system.

The latest test of the 'Son of Star Wars' programme, involving a Minuteman ICBM with a dummy warhead which would be targeted by a guided interceptor more than 120 miles over the Pacific, was set for early today.

The Russian President, Mr Vladimir Putin, has warned USA of revoking the Start II treaty if the latter goes ahead with the deployment of a national missile defence system to counter the perceived threat posed by North Korea.

The implied threat is that Russia would add more warheads to the SS27 which at present is a single-warhead ICBM. Under Start II, all land-based strategic missiles with multiple independently targeted warheads are to be scrapped. When the Duma voted to ratify Start II this year, Russia reserved the right to revoke the treaty if the USA went ahead with its national missile defence system in breach of the 1972 Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty.

According to Jane's Information Group, Russian reports on the SS27 emphasise the new missile's invulnerability to anti-ballistic missile defences.

"It has a more energetic first-stage engine and incorporates a new warhead and re-entry vehicle with reduced vulnerability to interceptors," Jane's Strategic Weapon Systems said.

The USA has tried to reassure Russia that the proposed national missile defence system will not affect the credibility of Russian strategic weapons.

THE STATESMAN



# Putin seeks equal status with G-8 nations

MARTIN NESIRKY  
MOSCOW, JULY 12

**P**RESIDENT Vladimir Putin wants Russia to play a full role with the Group of Seven leading industrialised countries rather than going cap in hand again to the rich club to raise cash for its battered economy.

In an interview with *Reuters*, Russia's *ORT Television* and Japan's *NHK Television* in his Kremlin reception room on Tuesday, the 47-year-old Russian leader looked relaxed and confident, answering questions without notes.

"We are not counting on or striving to receive any concrete privileges or benefits," he said, referring to a July 21-23 summit of the Group of Eight, which comprises Russia and the G7 — the United States, Japan, Germany, Britain, France, Italy and Canada.

"If all other developed countries of the world behaved towards Russia no worse than towards their other partners, that would be ideal." He also said:

■ Russia must march towards an orderly market economy, ending the chaos that made fortunes for some who have been "fishing in muddy waters". This was a veiled but unmistakable reference to Russia's influential businessmen, known as the oligarchs.

■ He saw some merits in U.S. President Bill Clinton's view about possible missile threats from rogue states but said it was still theoretical and no country posed a threat now.

■ He regarded Japan as a natural partner for Russia, because Tokyo had finished roads and Moscow had finished airports.

■ He would use his visit to North Korea next week, the first by a Kremlin leader, to help normalise relations on the divided Korean peninsula.

■ The Russian government could have been even more radical in its tax reform proposals and more energetic in persuading parliament to accept its plans.

Putin noted Russia had started meeting with the G7 nations under his predecessor Boris Yeltsin and this led to the term 'Group of Eight'.

"Back then, the talk was mostly about reviving and improving Russia's relations with leading financial international organisations, about credits for the Russian economy and so on," he said. "Today we do not subscribe to that format of relations with the leaders of the world's main industrial countries."



Russian Foreign Minister Igor Ivanov (centre), Sen Soshi (left), son of grand master of Urasenke Tradition of Tea, and Anastasia Kudryashova, a tea ceremony student, during the tea ceremony at World Convention Center in Miyazaki city. The Foreign Ministers' meeting of the Kyushu-Okinawa Summit began on Wednesday. AFP photo

view of the need for material needs on the one hand and material needs on the other." But Putin ruled out any swift breakthrough in a bitter territorial row over the ownership of four islands which has dogged relations between Moscow and Tokyo for decades.

On North Korea, he said it was unfortunate no Russian or Soviet leader had visited Pyongyang but he would remedy this next week. Russia would do all it could to help normalise North-South ties and improve bilateral relations with its Far Eastern neighbour.

On arms control, Putin said he saw some merit in Washington's concerns about rogue states' possible nuclear missile plans but saw no threat from any country at the moment. Putin, a staunch critic of US plans to build a national missile shield against rogue rockets, said moves to ward off new threats should not damage the existing nuclear balance.

"I believed and still believe that the position of the US President has some basis to it," Putin said. "And the basis is that we should assume that such threats can theoretically, in principle, emerge one day."

"But we do not believe that there are such threats now, nor that they are coming from any specific states," he added.

accept its plans.

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"Back then, the talk was mostly about reviving and improving Russia's relations with leading financial international organisations, about credits for the Russian economy and so on," he said. "Today we do not subscribe to that format of relations with the leaders of the world's main industrial countries."

Yeltsin made the G8 one of his foreign policy priorities, and one of his swansong international appearances as Russian President was at the Group's summit in Cologne last year. The ailing Yeltsin stepped down on New Year's Eve.

This year's summit takes place on the Japanese island of Okinawa, and will include bilateral meetings as well as the actual summit sessions.

Putin said he expected the leaders would discuss broad political concerns rather than Russia's economic problems. "Russia does not want to stand on the sidelines of these opportunities. It wants to use these opportunities. I intend to take part in the work of this club," he said.

Japan and Russia are natural partners because we are neighbours. We need each other," he said. "Russia and Japan complement each other from the point of

# Putin paints grim portrait of Russia, spells out new vision

Fred Weir  
Moscow, July 12

**R**USSIA'S NEW master, President Vladimir Putin, spelled out his vision for the country's future in a keynote address last weekend.

To the surprise of many, it combines the most liberal economic agenda to appear since the collapse of the USSR with a frankly authoritarian blueprint for the revival of strong state power.

"Putin expressed the new economic ideology that Russia will follow, and that is freedom," says Leonid Grigoriev, director of the Economic Analysis Bureau, a Kremlin-connected think tank.

"He made it clear that Russia will not survive as a strong, integral country unless there are sweeping and sustained reforms."

Though he never once mentioned the name of his predecessor and political mentor, Putin's 50-minute State of the Nation address was in effect a harsh repudiation of Boris Yeltsin's heritage. He described a Russia riven with



regional discord, weakened by massive capital flight and official corruption, and losing 750,000 citizens every year through premature deaths.

"It was quite a grim portrait of Russia ten years after the end of the Soviet Union," says independent analyst Nikolai Zyubov. "He meant to wake people up."

The six economic guidelines that Mr Putin laid out were commitments to protect private property

rights, slash subsidies to unprofitable industries, streamline the cumbersome state bureaucracy, cut taxes and tariffs, reform the banking sector and end welfare assistance to all but the poorest Russians.

If implemented, those principles are likely to trigger sharp political conflicts and widespread social discontent.

Under former President Yeltsin the government avoided unrest largely by keeping Soviet-era subsidies and social benefits in place, turning a blind eye to rampant official corruption and letting regional leaders go their own way.

Mr Putin's answer to how society must be made to swallow the bitter pill of market reform was simple: Tough government.

"Only a strong — use the word effective if you don't like strong — only an effective and democratic state is capable of protecting civic, political and economic freedoms," he said.

But many analysts worry Mr Putin's democratic rhetoric is a mask that will quickly fall away.

THE HINDUSTAN TIMES

13 JUL 2000

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## Putin summons defence chiefs

**MOSCOW, JULY 16.** The Russian President, Mr. Vladimir Putin, summoned his Defence Minister and the chief of staff today to put an end to their public row over the future of Russia's nuclear deterrent, Interfax news agency said.

The agency said the Defence Minister, Mr. Igor Sergeyev, and the armed forces chief of staff, Gen. Anatoly Kvashnin, had both left for the Black Sea resort of Sochi, where Mr. Putin was taking a break ahead of next week's visits to China, North Korea and a G8 summit in Japan.

A Kremlin spokesman said he could not immediately confirm the report and the Defence Ministry was not available for comment.

Mr. Putin had to step into the row splitting Russia's top military command after the long-simmering conflict spilled into the open earlier this week at a meeting of senior generals where Gen. Kvashnin proposed drastically reducing the nuclear forces' role.

Mr. Sergeyev, himself a former

strategic rocket forces commander and a staunch proponent of their independent position within the armed forces, countered the idea with a plan to beef up the deterrent. The meeting ended without any decision being taken.

General staff officers moved to stem rumours about a rift within the military, but the usually reserved Sergeyev went public, calling Gen. Kvashnin's suggestions a "psychotic attack" and his ideas "plain madness".

Mr. Putin quickly called on Sergeyev and Gen. Kvashnin to work together. He met the two before leaving Moscow and the Kremlin said they were told to prepare their arguments for a meeting of the advisory Security Council, due to discuss military reform.

Mr. Sergeyev and Gen. Kvashnin have long been at loggerheads over the future of Russia's armed forces, with the the war in Chechnya and U.S.-Russian nuclear cuts treaties giving Gen. Kvashnin grounds for demanding more money for ground forces. — Reuters

THE HINDU

17 JUL 2000

# Putin for closer ties with Iraq

Putin (D)  
HD-17

By Vladimir Radyuhin

MOSCOW, JULY 27. The Russian President, Mr. Vladimir Putin, received the Iraqi Deputy Prime Minister, Mr. Tariq Aziz, in the Kremlin on Wednesday, reiterating Moscow's support for Iraq and calling for closer ties between the two countries.

"Russia has always opposed air strikes on Iraq and will consistently support it in the United Nations," the Interfax news agency quoted the Russian leader as saying at the start of the meeting.

Mr. Putin said Russia was happy with the current state of relations with Iraq, but noted that bilateral cooperation could be more efficient if international control over Iraq's mass destruction weapons were resumed, Interfax said. Mr. Aziz was reported to have brought a message to Mr. Putin from the Iraqi President, Mr. Saddam Hussein.

Mr. Putin recalled his meeting with Mr. Aziz when the Russian leader worked there several years



The Russian President, Mr. Vladimir Putin (right), greets the Iraqi Deputy Prime Minister, Mr. Tariq Aziz, during their meeting at the Kremlin in Moscow on Wednesday. — AP

ago. "We had a constructive discussion," the Russian President said, according to Interfax. "Unfortunately, little has changed

since then in the situation regarding Iraq."

Earlier on Wednesday, Mr. Aziz, who arrived in Moscow on Tues-

day for a three-day visit, conferred for three hours with the influential Security Council Secretary, Mr. Sergei Ivanov. Describing Iraq as a "friend of Russia," Mr. Ivanov said that the two countries had adopted "a pragmatic approach to developing bilateral relations in the existing international framework." He said he had discussed with Mr. Aziz "proposals to strengthen economic ties between our two countries." Mr. Ivanov said it was too early to disclose the proposals.

Russian media said Mr. Aziz' visit was part of Moscow's efforts to forge closer ties with what countries labelled "rogue regimes" by Washington. The Iraqi leader has come to Russia on the heels of Mr. Putin's visit to North Korea and on the eve of a visit to Moscow by Libya's Foreign Minister.

The Russian television said Russia and Iraq could reopen direct air flights between the capitals of the two countries.

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28 JUL 200

US President's interview to Putin's chief critic causes headache

# Clinton visits troublemaker radio

FROM RON POPESKI

Moscow, June 4 (Reuters): US President Bill Clinton and secretary of state Madeleine Albright marked their visit to Moscow today with events at two radio stations causing headaches for their host, President Vladimir Putin.

Clinton was to field questions in an unprecedented hour-long radio evening phone-in programme on the popular radio station Ekho Moskv, while Albright started her day by visiting staff at US-funded Radio Liberty.

Both stations have been in the focus of concerns among liberals seeking assurances that post-Soviet freedom of speech will be upheld under the no-nonsense approach of Putin, inaugurated as president last month.

Putin and other officials say press freedoms are sacrosanct. Liberals cite as grounds for doubt a raid last month by masked police on the prominent Media-MOST group and a dubious swap earlier this year involving a Radio Liberty correspondent in Chechnya.

Clinton's appearance on Ekho Moskv, promoted throughout the day on radio and television, is the first such no-holds-barred contact between Russian listeners and a US President. It is also to be shown on private NTV's flagship Itogi news programme.

Ekho Moskv and NTV are stablemates in the Media-MOST group, which authorities said was raided as part of an inquiry into financial misdeeds.

Both have constantly nipped at the Kremlin's heels on the Chechnya campaign and the upholding of post-Soviet liberties. Liberal journalists said the swoop was aimed at bringing independent media into line with more docile state-run outlets.

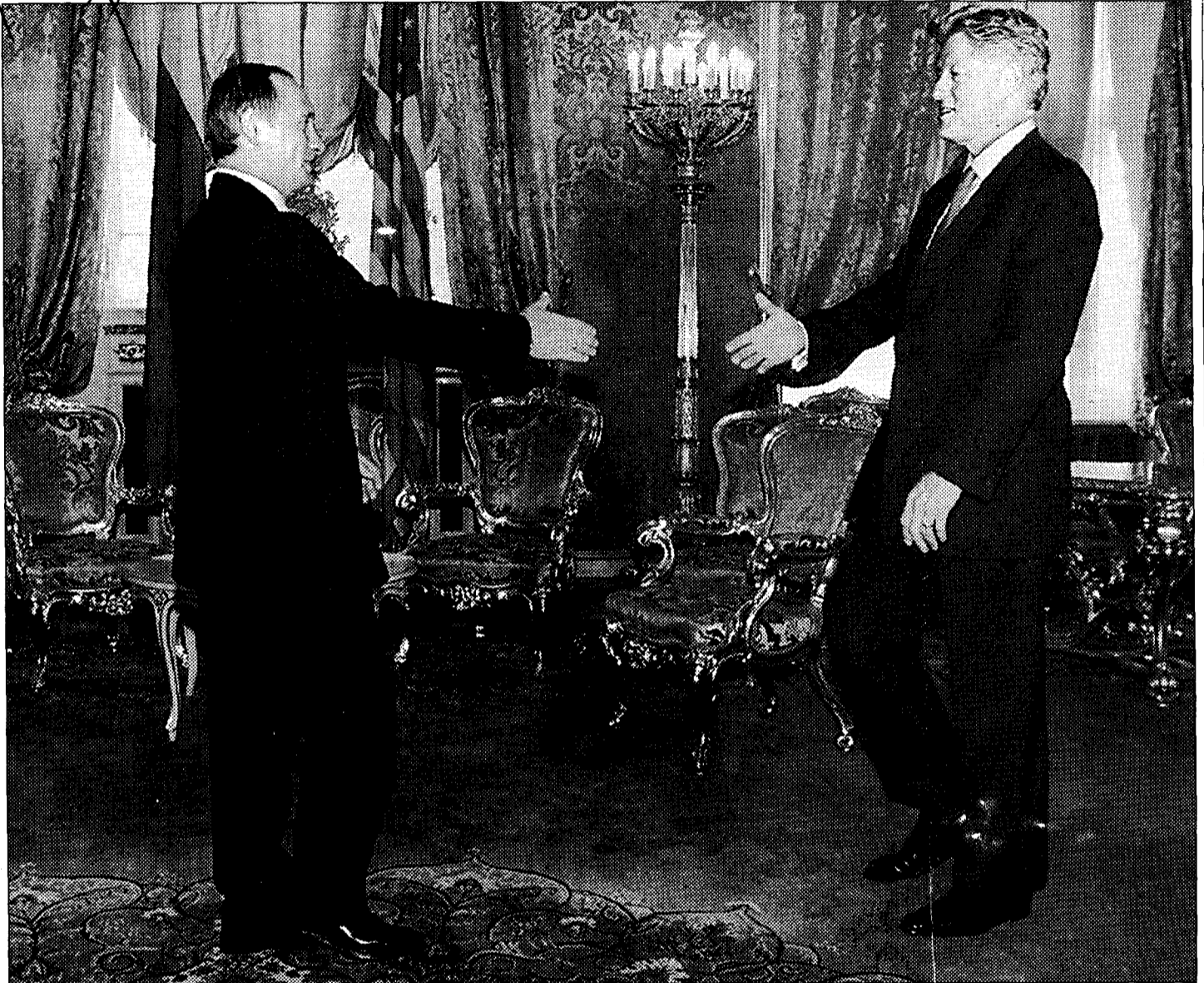
Later in the evening, NTV's satirical programme Kukly (Puppets) — scathing skits with Russian politicians in puppet form — is to feature a puppet depicting the US President.

Staff at Radio Liberty, set up during the Cold War with sister station Radio Free Europe to reach listeners in communist eastern Europe, said Albright engaged in an informal chat on Russian issues. It was neither broadcast nor recorded.

"We talked about freedom of speech in Russia and democracy in the region and Putin's administrative reforms," correspondent Sophie Labroschini said by telephone. "It was a very relaxed, free and warm discussion seated around a table."

She said there was no focus on Radio Liberty's difficulties in Russia or the disappearance for several weeks of Chechnya war correspondent Vladimir Babitsky, even though Babitsky was present.

Russian authorities said they handed Babitsky, highly critical of the military drive mastermind-



US President Bill Clinton is greeted by Russian President Vladimir Putin during their second meeting in Kremlin on Sunday. (AFP)

ed by Putin, to Chechen guerrillas in February in exchange for captured soldiers.

Western governments and media denounced the purported swap. Babitsky surfaced mysteriously a month later in an adjacent Russian region and faces charges of holding a forged passport.

## Wild boar and goose

Clinton spent last night in Russia in style — dining on wild boar and goose, touring the private presidential quarters at the Kremlin and listening to jazz music until midnight.

Clinton arrived yesterday in Moscow, the third leg and highlight of his four-nation European tour, and headed almost immediately to the Kremlin for his first meeting with Putin since he took over Russia's top job.

The dinner, which a senior U.S. official termed as "congenial" with "easygoing" conversations, lasted nearly three hours, then was finished off with a private concert by some of Russia's best-known jazzmen.

Clinton had a warm, backslapping relationship with Putin's predecessor Boris Yeltsin. Putin

is anything but backslapping, but both the US and Russian side characterised the dinner last night as as warm, saying the two leaders got on well.

Putin, a dour former KGB spy who is not known to be a jazz fanatic like Clinton, pulled out all the stops with the concert and a rare glimpse at his personal quarters — which once would have been off limits to Russia's former American foes.

Veteran Russian jazz great Oleg Lundstrem, who has been awarded the title of the "People's Artist of Russia", led his State Jazz Chamber Orchestra in American and Russian tunes including Duke Ellington's Dear Old Southland and Old Circus Train.

"We have played many times in the United States, the last time two years ago at a jazz festival in Santa Barbara.

But the orchestra has not had an opportunity to meet the American President yet," Lundstrem told Itar-Tass news agency.

Lundstrem, now in his 80s, was a jazz pioneer in the former Soviet Union and runs one of the country's oldest bands.

He was followed by the Youth

Jazz Ensemble and the Igor Butman Quartet. Saxophonist Butman is also a popular performer and has worked in the US.

One of the conductors told Tass that Clinton did not take up Lundstrem's offer to play a saxophone, which he brought to the Kremlin in case the American President — a keen saxophone player — felt like lending his efforts to the music.

But he said Clinton clearly enjoyed the evening's entertainment. Before the concert, which lasted until about midnight, Putin offered his guest a host of local delicacies before giving him a tour of his private quarters.

After starting on traditional Russian "bliny" pancakes, Clinton was treated to cold spicy wild boar and "shchi" cabbage soup. That was followed by trout and goose in red wine sauce.

Taking a break to digest before a rich dessert of plum ice cream, Putin took Clinton on a 50-minute tour of his residence at the Kremlin.

They strolled through Putin's personal, booklined study then visited a small chapel that is part of the presidential residence.

Putin even showed Clinton — an avid jogger before a knee injury a few years ago — his workout room complete with weights, and a massage table.

In the absence of hard news on the Kremlin talks, Russian media turned to more banal matters.

Itar-Tass news agency made much of Clinton's failure to embark on his customary morning jog, viewed as a bizarre pastime by most residents of heavily polluted Moscow.

It reported instead on the misadventures of an aide caught by police jaywalking across Moscow's main thoroughfare while on his run.

RTR state television tackled what it saw as more serious breaches of protocol — the absence of Hillary Clinton and the president's dress sense.

"Clinton arrived without the first lady and made his way down the ramp on his own. Madeleine Albright waited patiently until he got to the bottom. Everyone noticed this," RTR said.

"But observers also noted the length of the president's trousers, two cm (3/4 inch) shorter than in his entourage."

# Putin calls Clinton's bluff on missile defence

By M D Nalapat

NEW DELHI: Although the Clinton administration has named the "Rouge states" of Iran, Iraq and North Korea as the reason for developing an anti-missile system that can intercept warheads before



V. Putin

impact, the reality is that none of these countries is a direct strategic threat to the United States. While Iran and Iraq are decades away from the development of even medium-range missiles, the North Koreans lack the infrastructure to pursue their long-range missile programmes without substantial outside help. Hence, Pyongyang's policy of offering to trade such development for economic assistance.

The second official reason mentioned by President Bill Clinton to justify the NMD is

It is that nuclear weapons can fall into the hands of "terrorists and organised criminal group." While there exists a slim chance that "dirty" nukes (such as those developed by Pakistan) and even tactical nuclear weapons may get into such hands, the proposed NMD is not geared to defend against such threats, but against launches of longer-range strategic weapons. The odds that any such usable system will fall into the hands of "terrorists and criminals" is virtually zero.

In reality, the National Missile Defence (NMD) system favoured by the Clinton administration is designed to protect the United States against retaliatory nuclear attack by just two countries, Russia and China, it is only against them that the \$250 billion full costs of the NMD can be justified.

With the NMD in operation, the United States could for example

arm Taiwan with nuclear weapons (as it has Israel) without fear of retaliation by Beijing. In the case of Russia, despite Moscow's obsession with being accepted as a "good European" power, a fixation that began in the 1970s, the eastward expansion of NATO and the action against Yugoslavia underline the geopolitical reality that neither Germany nor France can accept Russia integrated into Europe, as this entity would marginalise both. Despite President Putin's efforts at playing the European card, this factor will ensure the exclusion of Moscow from the inner councils of the European Union, thus driving it closer to the other "outside" gear power, China.

By offering to collaborate with the United States in building a joint missile defence shield, President Putin has called Clinton's bluff. As Russia is a primary target of the shield, the question of collaboration with it will not arise un-

less it is a one-way street where Russian technology flows to the West and not vice-versa. NATO interests mandate the early collapse of Russian strategic infrastructure, hence President Putin is unlikely to get help from Western Europe to finance an upgradation in missile and weapon systems.

However, by ratifying both CTBT as well as start, Mr Putin has laid the onus for the collapse of the two-decade long architecture of arms control, on Washington. Those treaties were concluded at a time when Moscow was still a viable superpower. Today, it is an economic pygmy, and the United States would like amendments to existing treaties that reflect the huge imbalance between the relative importance of the two countries. Neither Beijing nor Moscow appear ready to ignore the threat to their security that such unilateralism by Washington represents, despite soothing rhetoric from NATO.

THE TIMES OF INDIA

- 8 JUN 2001

TUESDAY, MAY 9, 2000

## THE PUTIN PRESIDENCY

AFTER AN IMPRESSIVE swearing-in at the Kremlin on Sunday, the Putin Presidency has begun in Russia. Though he was already Acting President from January 1, Mr. Vladimir Putin launches his own innings now to rebuild a modern Russia to secure its rightful place in the international community. In only the second democratic election to the Russian Presidency, a smooth transition of power has taken place. Perhaps the best decision that an ailing and impulsive President, Mr. Boris Yeltsin, took was to resign on New Year's eve and install his Prime Minister, Mr. Putin, as the Acting President and anointed heir. As yet an unknown phenomenon, Mr. Putin has managed to hold his ground, evolve a working relationship with Parliament and initiate a major military offensive in Chechnya to crush what his administration called 'Islamic separatism'. Now that he is on his own wicket, the former secret service agent of Soviet vintage must spell out his vision and plan for the reconstruction of the Russian Federation. With the people giving him an overwhelming mandate in the March election and rejecting Mr. Gennady Zhyuganov and his brand of communism once again, the expectations are bound to be high. Mr. Putin must outline his road map for the political and economic revival of Russia.

By choosing his First Deputy Premier, Mr. Mikhail Kasyanov, as the Acting Prime Minister, the new President may be signalling his economic policy and push for reforms. Assuming that the Duma obliges him with a straightforward confirmation of the next Prime Minister, Mr. Putin must still spell out how he plans to pull out the Federation from its present economic ruin, rise in crime, corruption and collapse of both the public sector as well as the social security systems of the Soviet era. More than the political and diplomatic forays, Russians must be looking forward to new economic initiatives that can trigger both a spurt in industrial growth and income

generation for the people. Pseudo capitalism and economic exploitation have been the only gains of reforms till now and the Putin administration must work out a balanced development strategy that can allow the private sector to evolve and at the same time protect or cushion the poor from the short term effects of the restructuring programme. Thousands of employees have not been paid regular wages and crime as well as extortion seem to be the order of the day. While helping the poor to come to terms with the transition, he must stamp out the organised gangs to restore the rule of law.

There are signs of Russian activism on the international stage and also a hint at complying with past commitments. The recent ratification by the Duma of the START treaty with the U.S. signals the latter and also the control of Mr. Putin. The pronouncements of the Foreign Minister in Washington and the unambiguous warnings to the U.S. administration smack of new-found optimism in the future of the Federation. Even if Mr. Putin may have won his first battle in Chechnya, the scars are difficult to heal and questions on human rights violations remain unanswered. If Mr. Putin wants to create a multipolar world in the new millennium, his task is cut out. He must first consolidate Russia, forge a new partnership with the former Soviet Republics and enter into a dialogue with the European Union. Equations with the U.S., under a new President next year, will be another priority. Both China and Japan are courting Moscow in their own ways to build a new partnership. From an Indian perspective, Mr. Putin has promised to visit New Delhi later this year to provide new substance and direction to a strategic partnership that already exists. There are many economic and trade problems to be sorted out. His first few months and policy directions may give a hint of both Mr. Putin and his Presidency.

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9 2000

# Putin names Kasyanov Premier

REUTERS

MOSCOW, May 10. — The Russian President today asked the Parliament's lower house, Duma, to approve Mr Mikhail Kasyanov as his new Prime Minister.



Mr Putin

Just hours after his inauguration on Sunday, Mr Vladimir Putin named Mr Kasyanov as the acting Prime Minister. Mr Kasyanov, a 42-year-old economist well known to the West, had been first deputy Prime Minister and then finance minister in the outgoing Cabinet.

With his plea to Duma, Mr Putin has made clear that he wants Mr Kasyanov to run the economy, which is showing some signs of improvement after months in the doldrums.

"I am proposing the candidature of Kasyanov to secure the consent of the state Duma to be appointed as chairman of the government in accordance with Article 83 of the Constitution of the Russian federation," Interfax news agency quoted

Mr Putin as saying in a letter to Duma.

Under the Constitution, the President has two weeks to name his candidate for Prime Ministership. Duma has a week to consider the nomination and vote on it.

"I cannot say how united Duma is in its thinking. I'm not at all certain about that," Mr Vladimir Lukin, Duma's deputy chairman, told RTR state TV before the letter was sent. "But I am certain the majority of deputies will confirm the Prime Minister proposed by Putin. Not because of his name or personality, but because he has been proposed by the newly elected President."

Political analysts said the choice of Mr Kasyanov shows Mr Putin wants to rely on already proven ministers and take a firm grip on government.

**Russia denial:** The Kremlin today denied the Chechen President, Mr Aslan Maskhadov's claims that he has sent a formal peace proposal to the Russian leadership to end the nine-month conflict in the North Caucasus, reports DPA.

THE STATESMAN

1 MAY 2000



# Russia eases restrictions on nuclear export

By Vladimir Radyuhin

MOSCOW, MAY 13. Russia has eased restrictions on export of nuclear materials and technologies that kept it from building more nuclear reactors in India, Iran and Cuba.

The President, Mr. Vladimir Putin, has amended a 1992 presidential decree, which banned nuclear exports to those non-nuclear weapon States that did not open their facilities to International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) monitoring. Hereafter, nuclear exports will be allowed "in exceptional circumstances" and approved on a case-by-case basis.

Mr. Yuri Bepalko, press secretary to the Atomic Energy Minister, Mr. Yevgeny Adamov, told *The Hindu* that the decree made it possible for Russia to build more nuclear reactors in India. Under a \$2.6-billion deal, negotiated in the 1980s and revived in 1998, Russia is to supply two 1000-MW reactors for the Kudankulam nuclear power station.

The Atomic Energy Minister said last month

that his Ministry hoped to clinch a contract with India, to construct five additional nuclear reactors at Kudankulam. Russia is also preparing a Detailed Project Report for two light-water reactors, which should be ready by year-end.

The new decree stipulates stringent conditions for authorising exports of nuclear materials, equipment and technologies. Exports must not violate existing international agreements signed by Russia; the importing country must give official assurance that the supplies will not be used to create nuclear explosives and the nuclear facilities should be brought under the control of the IAEA.

The decree is also expected to advance Russia's nuclear deals with Iran and Cuba. Iran is willing to buy three nuclear reactors from Russia, in addition to the one being built in Bushahr. And Cuba wants Russia to complete the construction of a nuclear power station started by the Soviet Union and stalled after its breakup.

14 MAY 2000

# Putin signs test ban treaty law

HO-16  
Russia  
MOSCOW, MAY 28. The Russian President, Mr. Vladimir Putin, has put the final touch to Russia's acceptance of the global nuclear test ban treaty, signing the law passed by Parliament last month and bringing it into force, Interfax news agency said today.

Interfax said the law had been signed yesterday though the Kremlin could not immediately confirm the report.

Russia has stolen a march on the U.S. in ratifying the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty (CTBT) as the U.S. Senate has yet to approve the document.

The pact builds on a 1963 partial test ban treaty outlawing nuclear blasts in the atmosphere, outer space or under water but needs to be ratified by all 44 nuclear-capable states before it can come into effect and ban testing in any environment.

To date, 41 countries have signed the CTBT and 28 have ratified. Of the 44 nations judged to have some form of nuclear capability, India, Pakistan and North Korea have not signed.

Among the five declared nuclear powers, France and Britain have ratified while China and the U.S. have signed but not ratified.

## Ivanov reappointed

Mr. Putin has re-appointed Mr. Sergei Ivanov as the secretary of the National Security Council, the Kremlin announced.

## E.U.-Russia summit

Meanwhile, the European Union tomorrow holds its first summit with Russia under Mr. Putin, keen to forge strong ties with Moscow despite continued friction over the Russian crackdown in Chechnya.

The March election of Mr. Putin (47), who has placed young reformers in key economic posts, is seen in European capitals as an opportunity to begin a new chap-



ter in their relations with the ailing and prickly nuclear superpower.

The Russian leader will host a high-level delegation including the E.U. foreign policy head, Mr. Javier Solana, the Prime Minister of Portugal, Mr. Antonio Guterres — which currently holds the Union's rotating presidency — and the European Commission President, Mr. Romano Prodi.

Ahead of the one-day summit in Moscow, the 15-nation bloc urged Russia to use its relationship with the E.U. as a counterweight to Washington's global dominance.

"If Russia had closer relations with the European Union, it would avoid the pitfalls of the dollarisation of the economy and attempts to introduce a us economic model," said the Portuguese Foreign Minister, Mr. Jaime Gama.

"The only real power which counteracts U.S. hegemony is not Russia with its nuclear potential but the European Union," Mr. Gama said in an interview with Russia's *Kommersant* daily. — Reuters, PTI AFP

THE HINDU

29 MAY 2000

# Russia presses Chechen offensive

REUTERS

MOSCOW, May 30. — Russian forces today pressed a large-scale offensive in Chechnya into a third day, sealing off more than 400 rebel fighters in the region's south-eastern mountains, a Kremlin aide said.

Mr Konstantin Makeyev, the Kremlin's deputy spokesman on Chechnya, also said five Russian servicemen had been killed during fierce fighting in the Nozhai-Yurt district but denied reports the rebels had ambushed an armoured column.

"We can say a large-scale special operation is in progress," Mr Makeyev said, adding that commando units were involved in the offensive rather than regular troops.

"The aim is twofold — to ensure that the bandits don't break out of Chechnya and to destroy them, especially their leaders," he said.

The military has said its priority in Chechnya is to capture or kill Chechen warlord Shamil Basayev, Russia's most wanted man, and his sidekick, Arab-born Khattab, believed to be coordinating rebel resistance to Moscow.

Ria news agency said the rebels had mounted a new ambush yesterday against a Russian army column — a practice which has claimed the lives of many servicemen in recent months.

Mr Makeyev denied any ambush but confirmed that five Russians had been killed during a "heavy battle" with a band of fighters. He said "more than 15 rebels" had been killed in the clash.

Mr Makeyev said the Russian forces involved had been interior ministry troops and paratroops, not regular conscripts.

The clash happened yesterday.

Both sides in this war tend to exaggerate the other's losses and play down their own.

Mr Makeyev said Russian forces had discovered a rebel base near Kharsenoi in southern Chechnya believed to be used by around 150 fighters.

The deputy spokesman said the troops had seized equipment including two satellite dishes, shells, grenades and 20 tonnes of fuel.

He was not able to confirm an Interfax report that a bodyguard of Basayev had been captured by Russian forces.

The campaign has coincided with talks in Moscow between the President, Mr Vladimir Putin and the leaders of the European Union, who repeated their call for an end to the war and the start of peace talks.

It also comes days before the arrival in Moscow of the US President, Mr Bill Clinton, another critic of Russian tactics.

Today, Interfax quoted foreign ministry official, Mr Alexander Yakovenko, as criticising the OSCE, saying it could set up shop "even tomorrow" but was dragging its feet.

In the past, OSCE officials have said they want firm security guarantees before returning to a region long plagued by kidnappings for ransom and several other crimes.

THE STATESMAN

31 MAY 2001

# Russia agrees to talks with EU after rebuke

BY PATRICK LANNIN

**Moscow, April 7:** Russian President-elect Vladimir Putin was due to meet top officials from the European Union on Friday as his country smarted from a fresh rebuke over alleged human rights abuses in rebel Chechnya.

The parliamentary assembly of the Council of Europe human rights body voted on Thursday to suspend Russia if it did not show progress on holding talks with the rebels and improving its human rights record in the region.

Russia's delegation walked out of the assembly after its voting powers were suspended. The Speaker of Russia's Duma Lower House of Parliament, Mr Gennady Seleznyov, condemned the vote as a "colossal and historic mistake"

Mr Putin, a strong backer of the campaign to defeat what Russia calls terrorists in Chechnya, was to meet European Union foreign policy chief Javier Solana and Portuguese foreign minister Jaime Gama, whose country is current EU President.

The Council vote gave more urgency to the talks, expected to focus on Chechnya as well as improving relations between the trade bloc and Moscow. The suspension of Russia can only be approved by the governments of the 41-nation body, which is not part of the EU.

Officials in Strasbourg, where the Council is based, said member states were unlikely to back the assembly's recommendation when they reported back to the chamber in June.

Mr Gama, speaking after his arrival in Moscow, echoed other comments by the officials in Strasbourg that Russia should see the assembly vote as a sign of international concern. "It must be essentially a matter of concern for Russia," said Mr Gama.

"I want to emphasise that the decision which has been taken at the parliamentary level is above all a warning message. It is not yet the full decision, it must be assessed after at the council of ministers level," he said.

French foreign minister Hubert Vedrine and EU external relations commissioner Mr Chris Patten, who complete the so-called EU troika, should also have attended the talks in Moscow but dropped out due to prior engagements abroad. (Reuters)

THE ASIAN AGE

8 APR 2000

# Russia stripped of voting rights in Europe Council

Fred Weir  
Moscow, April 7

**R**USSIA HAS reacted with surprise and shock to a Council of Europe decision to begin suspension procedures against Moscow for its alleged human rights violations in the war-torn republic of Chechnya.

"The Council of Europe has made a fatal mistake," Russian Speaker of Parliament Gennady Seleznyov said Friday, after European parliamentarians meeting in Strasbourg stripped Russia of its voting rights in the 41-nation body.

"Our European colleagues do not understand what is going on in Russia," he said. "We are not a country that yields to this sort of pressure. We will find a way to pursue our own goals without them."

Russia's parliamentary delegation in Strasbourg staged a dramatic walkout after the Council voted Thursday to initiate a total suspension unless Moscow immediately halts all human rights violations in Chechnya.

In the Council's 51-year history no country has ever before been suspended. "Russia has violated some of its most important obligations under both the European Convention on Human Rights and international humanitarian law," said the text of the motion passed by the Council.

The Russian delegation's leader, Dimitry Rogozin, warned the decision could lead to "a new Iron Curtain" dividing Europe. "The discussion in the Council was extremely unproductive and not constructive. The Council has showed a total lack

**No President's rule**  
MOSCOW TODAY decided not to impose President's rule in Chechnya. This was disclosed here by Deputy Prime Minister Nikolai Koshman after meeting President Vladimir Putin in Kremlin.  
A Novosti report quoted Mr Koshman as saying that said election for the post of head of Chechnya will not be held earlier than 2001-2002. But the local parliamentary election will be held shortly.  
**UNI, Moscow**

lead to a chain-reaction among other key Western clubs that Moscow has joined over the past 10 years.

"There is no way that Russia can fail to react to this development," says Nikolai Petrov, an analyst with the Carnegie Endowment in Moscow. "We are facing a real threat of becoming isolated in Europe. Mr. Petrov says most experts had been certain that the Council would limit itself to just criticizing Russia's Chechnya war at this stage. "We were expecting to be given at least until the end of May to finish the war and restore order. This move is a terrible diplomatic blow to Russia".

Analysts say the situation was aggravated by the ill feelings surrounding the recent visit of United Nations human rights chief Mary Robinson to Chechnya. Ms. Robinson wound up a five-day visit to the

war zone Wednesday claiming that she had been barred from inspecting key sites in Chechnya, and that what she had seen and heard indicated that "serious and documented" rights violations by Russia need to be investigated.

Russian President Vladimir Putin declined to meet with Ms. Robinson, and other Russian officials harshly rejected her allegations. A visibly angry Ms. Robinson flew to Strasbourg, where she conveyed her views to European parliamentary leaders. She then went on to Geneva, where she delivered a scathing report on Russian human rights practices in Chechnya to a session of the UN Rights Commission.

"Russia is very frustrated by the refusal of Europeans to understand our position," says Vassily Lipitsky, deputy director of the Fund for Realism in Politics.

# Duma may ratify N-arms treaty

REUTERS

WASHINGTON, April 10. — Russia has told the USA its Parliament could ratify an arms reduction treaty signed seven years ago before Moscow's foreign minister, Mr Igor Ivanov, visits Washington in 19 days.

(Russian parliamentary leaders today said that the Lower House may vote this month for the long-delayed ratification of the Start II nuclear arms reduction treaty, adds AP from Moscow.

(The international affairs committee of the state Duma discussed the treaty's prospects today at a meeting attended by the foreign minister, Mr Igor Ivanov, and the defence minister, Mr Igor Sergeev.

(After the discussion, 11 members of the committee backed ratification of the treaty and 7 spoke against it, committee chief, Mr Dmitry Ragozin, said.)

The move will give a psychological boost to tricky post-Cold War relations between the countries.

The US deputy secretary of state, Mr Strobe Talbott, told Reuters in an interview on Friday that the Kremlin was saying the process of ratifying Start II, signed in January 1993, was under way.

Although each side has been assuming ratification of Start II — an acronym for strategic arms reductions talks which would cut nuclear warheads to

3,400 each by 2003 — it would end an embarrassing delay and allow talks on deeper nuclear arms cuts to begin in earnest.

"The Russians continue to assure us, including in the last 24 hours, that the process for ratifying Start II in the Duma is under way ... And that in fact there could even be ratification of Start II by the Duma before (the) foreign minister, (Mr) Ivanov, comes to Washington," Mr Talbott said in his office.

Mr Bill Clinton and Mr Boris Yeltsin agreed to the parameters of Start III talks back in March 1997. With Start II, the number of nuclear warheads would be cut to 2,000-2,500 by 2007, though Russia would like deeper cuts now.

Ratification would also provide an encouraging sign that President-elect, Mr Vladimir Putin, who is also acting President, may have more success at working with the Duma than his predecessor.

At the talks, the USA will bring up the anti-ballistic missile (ABM) treaty, which it hopes Russia will agree to amend, allowing Mr Clinton to add a national missile defence to his legacy when he leaves office next year. The treaty bars an anti-missile defence system.

Mr Ivanov and the secretary of state, Mrs Madeleine Albright, will also discuss the date and venue of a Clinton-Putin summit when the foreign

minister becomes the first high-level official to visit from Moscow since Mr Putin's election on 26 March.

Russian and US sources said they wanted a summit to take place before Mr Putin and Mr Clinton cross paths at a Group of Eight meeting in Okinawa, Japan, between 21 and 23 July.

Mr Talbott said the situation in the Balkans and in Chechnya would also be a focus of Mr Ivanov's discussions here on 26 and 27 April, after he attends a review of the 1970 treaty on the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons on 24-25 April in New York.

Altering the 1972 ABM treaty is particularly close to the heart of Russian scholar Talbott, whose friendship with Mr Clinton goes back more than 30 years to the days when they were Rhodes Scholars at Oxford University.

Mr Talbott has been conducting negotiations with Russian deputy foreign minister, Mr Georgyamedov in a bid to persuade him that the USA does not seek to neutralise Russia's defences or scrap mutual deterrence by developing a system to shoot down missiles from what Washington considers "rogue" states like North Korea.

"We want very much to see Start III go forward. We would like to see the process of reducing offensive nuclear weapons continue and even accelerate," Mr Talbott said.

THE STATESMAN

THE STATESMAN

11 APR 2000

# Moscow warns of air strikes on Taliban bases

Russia  
10-16

11/4

By Vladimir Radyuhin

MOSCOW, APRIL 10. A top Kremlin official has said Moscow reserved the right to carry out air strikes at terrorist training bases run by the Taliban in Afghanistan, a Russian news agency reported.

Talking to mediapersons after a security meeting in Dushanbe, Tajikistan, Mr. Sergei Ivanov, secretary of Russia's Security Council, said the need for preventive strikes could be dictated by the situation in Afghanistan, the Uro internet news service said.

"If the situation grows threatening and aggressive forays assume a large-scale character, I would not theoretically rule out the possibility of mounting preventive strikes," Mr. Ivanov said, adding: "If we play strictly by the rules in opposing such a terrible evil as international terrorism, we will be losing all the time."

Mr. Ivanov, a former colleague of Russia's President-elect, Mr. Vladimir Putin, in the Soviet KGB, has emerged as the Kremlin's most authoritative spokesman on security and foreign policy issues since Mr. Putin took over as acting President over four months ago. He is believed to be far more influential than the Foreign Minister, Mr. Igor Ivanov.

A weekend meeting of security officials from former Soviet republics — members to the 1992 Collective Security Pact discussed joint measures to combat international terrorism and drug trafficking.

Mr. Ivanov's reference to "aggressive forays" was apparently related to an incursion of some 1,000 Islamic rebels into southern Kyrgyzstan last autumn. It took Kyrgyz security forces two months to squeeze the rebels out of the country.

Kyrgyzstan's President, Mr. Askar Akayev, last month warned that Islamic rebels may repeat the invasion this year. The Secretary of the Kyrgyz Security Council, Mr. Bolot Dzhanzakov, estimated recently that some 400 Islamists were concentrated in border areas between Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan, as well as in Afghanistan, ready for a push into Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan, and that rebels fleeing from Chechnya can soon swell that number to 4,000 or 5,000.

Russia is taking the Islamic terrorist threat very seriously.

Last week, it helped stage Southern Shield-2000 war games in Uzbekistan. Troops from Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Kazakhstan and Russia practised repelling potential attacks from militants in mountain areas.

Earlier, Moscow took initiative in setting up a joint anti-terrorist centre for the post-Soviet Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS). The terrorist threat was also discussed last month at a meeting of the CIS Defence Ministers in Moscow and a meeting of the Shanghai Five, which groups Russia, China, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan.

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THE HINDU

11 APR 2001

# Putin seeks closer Western ties

ASSOCIATED PRESS

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LONDON, April 17. — Russia's President-elect, seeking closer ties with Europe and an improved image, told British business leaders today that Russia has learned from past mistakes and faced the future with "tremendous self-confidence".

Mr Vladimir Putin, on his first trip to the West as head of state, met Prime Minister Tony Blair and also had an appointment with Queen Elizabeth II at Windsor Castle, west of London.

Groups of demonstrators dogged Mr Putin, angered at the Russian crackdown in Chechnya and allegations that troops have used excessive

force and executed civilians in the breakaway republic.

Soon after he arrived, Mr Putin said polls would be held in Chechnya in two years.

Some 50 protesters, waving Chechen flags, chanted slogans as the Russian leader's bullet-proof limousine swept up to Mr Blair's 10 Downing Street residence, where he held talks and had lunch.

"Russia is not a shortened map of the ex-Soviet Union, it is a country which has tremendous self-confidence, a self-confidence based not only on our experience of reform but on errors we have committed," Mr Putin told the Confederation of British Industry before meeting Mr Blair at the start of the 24-hour visit.

Russia 11  
"We have tried to learn the lesson, and during the last years we have learned how to distinguish real opportunities from superficial opportunities," he said. He pledged to tackle Russia's burdensome tax code, create an independent judicial system, and said his primary goal was to integrate Russia into the world economy.

"We understand that our problems are complex, but our success is dependent also on patience, endurance and understanding of all the people we consider our partners. And by this I mean you," Mr Putin said.

Mr Putin, a longtime KGB agent who never held elected office until last month's presidential vote, has made it clear

that Russia's future lies with Europe.

British commentators said Mr Putin appeared to have singled out Britain as a key partner to cultivate.

Mr Blair, who visited St Petersburg in March, was the first Western leader Mr Putin met after becoming acting President. The British Prime Minister, who at 46 is one year younger than the Russian leader, left impressed by his energy and ambitions for Russia, aides said.

But while topics such as fighting drugs, international crime and terrorism, and nuclear cooperation dominated the agenda, critics urged Mr Blair to tackle Mr Putin over Chechnya.

THE STATESMAN

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# Russia poised to ratify CTBT

By Vladimir Radyuhin

**MOSCOW, APRIL 17.** Pressing its diplomatic offensive, Russia is poised to ratify the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT), which was rejected by the U.S. Congress last year.

The Defence Committee of the State Duma, Russian Parliament's lower House, on Monday recommended CTBT for ratification. The State Duma will debate the issue at its next session on Wednesday, less than a week after it ratified the START-II nuclear arms reduction treaty.

As with START-II, the initiative to ratify CTBT came from the Kremlin, parliamentary sources said. If that is the case, the lower House is bound to approve CTBT, as it approved START-II on Friday, because the Kremlin enjoys broad support in Parliament on defence issues.

The recommendation to ratify CTBT came in very handy for Russia's President-elect, Mr. Vladimir Putin, who was in London on Monday for his maiden foreign trip. Defence and disarmament issues were likely to come up in Mr. Putin's talks with the British Prime Minister, Mr. Tony Blair, whom the Kremlin regards as a possible mediator between Moscow and Washington.

Mr. Putin said ratification of START-II by the Russian Parliament put the ball in U.S. court and called for slashing the nuclear stockpiles of Russia and the U.S. from the level of 3,000-3,500 warheads envisaged by START-II to 1,500 warheads.

"Ratification of START-II opens the way for official talks on further reductions of the strategic arsenals of Russia and the U.S. in the framework of START-II," Mr. Putin said in a special statement issued in Moscow over the weekend.

THE END

16 APR

# Vladimir Putin holds key talks in Ukraine

KIEV: Russian President-elect Vladimir Putin on Tuesday said after meeting President Leonid Kuchma of Ukraine that he wanted to raise relations with the former Soviet neighbour to a new level.



Vladimir Putin

Mr Putin, fresh from talks in London with British Prime Minister Tony Blair, is making his first foray abroad since winning the March presidential election, a trip during which he has tried to balance ties between the West and the East.

In their talks Mr Putin and Mr Kuchma touched on problems related to Ukraine's 1.4 billion-dollar debt for gas to Russia and other questions. "The solution of these issues should be aimed at one goal, to consolidate relations of friendship, co-operation and strategic partnership between the Russian federation and Ukraine," Mr Putin told a news conference.

"The solution should help to bring our peoples closer and bring our relations to a qualitatively better level than the one which existed until now," he said. Although close Slavic cousins, relations between the two nations have been marked by Ukraine's wariness of its traditionally dominant neighbour. In the post-Soviet period, Ukraine has tried to forge ties with the West without antagonising Moscow.

Mr Putin was due later to fly south with Mr Kuchma to Ukraine's Crimean peninsula to see Russia's Black Sea fleet. "I believe the visit of the President of the Russian Federation will lay a serious groundwork for a strategic partnership," Mr Kuchma said.

Mr Kuchma and Mr Putin's predecessor, Boris Yeltsin, used to hold "no-necktie" meetings to resolve bilateral issues, but a leading Ukrainian politician warned last month that the Putin era could come as a "cold shower" for cash-strapped Kiev.

Although Mr Kuchma and Mr Yeltsin sweetened the acrimony of early post-Soviet relations with a deal splitting the strategic Black Sea fleet, tensions remain.

The question of gas supplies to Ukraine was one of the sorest for Russia because of the debt. Mr Kuchma promised he would crack down on Ukrainian companies, which he conceded had been illegally tapping Russian gas from pipes.

The two sides have yet to agree on the exact size of Ukraine's gas debt. Ukraine acknowledged 1.4 billion dollars earlier this year, but Russian gas monopoly Gazprom claims it totals more than two billion dollars.

Ukraine depends heavily on energy imports from Russia and is entitled to a certain amount of free gas as payment for a pipeline which crosses its territory. But Russia says it consistently takes more than the agreed amounts.

Gazprom chief Rem Vyakhirev accused Ukraine last week of stealing gas. Russia's Black Sea fleet, which rents its harbour in the port of Sevastopol from Ukraine, is also at the heart of complicated financial arrangements between the two countries.

Ukraine has also had visits in the past week from British foreign secretary Robin Cook and U.S. secretary of state Madeleine Albright.

While Mr Putin was in Britain the United States announced that he and President Bill Clinton would hold their first summit in Moscow on June 4 and 5. (Reuters)

THE TIMES OF INDIA

THE TIMES OF INDIA

# Kremlin reanimates Primakov's triangle

By Vladimir Radyuhin

**MOSCOW, APRIL 20.** Under its new President, Mr. Vladimir Putin, Russia will strive to forge trilateral cooperation China and India on regional security, broached two years ago by the then Prime Minister, Mr. Yevgeny Primakov.

"We would like to help Delhi and Beijing in every way to resolve their differences, with the aim of creating conditions for developing interaction between Russia, China and India on issues of regional security," said Mr. Sergei Ivanov, secretary to Russia's Security Council. At the same time he stressed that Moscow was not trying to forge a bloc.

"We are not talking by any means about creating some sort of a military-political alliance targeted against others," Mr. Ivanov said addressing a conference of the Organisation of Asian News Agencies (OANA) that opened in Moscow on Thursday. Russia is due to take over OANA chairmanship from Iran for the next three years.

"We are talking above all about promoting business-like cooperation and interaction in the sphere of combating terrorism and resolving conflicts on the basis of strict non-interference in internal affairs," he said.

This is the first time that a senior Kremlin official outlined Russia's priorities in Asia after the election of Mr. Putin as Russia's new President. Mr. Ivanov, who is believed to be very close to the President-elect, named India as

one of five centres of power in Asia which define the security set-up in the region.

"In the immediate future security prospects in the Asia-Pacific region, as before, will depend on the balance of forces among the main poles of power — the U.S., China, Japan, Russia, the ASEAN and India.

Therefore, international relations in the region will naturally drift towards multipolarity."

The Russian security chief called for further cooperation with India as one of the five poles in Asia. "We are trying to put to maximum use our common interests and identical approaches with India to main problems of the region," Mr. Ivanov said, noting India's "increasingly active involvement in regional affairs".

Russia favours active dialogue with the U.S. on regional security in Asia. According to Mr. Ivanov, "despite their own frictions with the U.S., most countries in the region recognise a stabilising role of U.S. military presence."

"There is no point in trying to rock the boat and try to change the status quo," he said. At the same time, he called for resolutely opposing "attempts to bring power pressure" in Asia and to assert "concepts preaching limited sovereignty and intervention on humanitarian grounds".

Mr. Ivanov confirmed Russia's commitment to sell arms in the Asia-Pacific region "on a selective basis," to avoid provoking a "run-away arms race".

Russia is willing to "deepen" defence cooperation with China, India and Vietnam, and to "develop" it with Japan, Indonesia and Malaysia, the Russian security chief said.

## Asia-Pacific cooperation

The Russian Foreign Minister, Mr. Igor Ivanov, who too was speaking at the OANA conference, said Russia is open to wide-ranging cooperation with the Asia-Pacific nations.

Mr. Igor Ivanov, too, called for building up a "community of cooperation and security" in the Asia-Pacific region, based on the shared interests and economic interdependence.

"The future of the Asia-Pacific region is inseparably linked with steady progress of integrational processes," he said.

According to the Russian Foreign Minister, the media is to play a key role in turning Asia into a flourishing region.

At the same time, he warned against misusing the media for stoking confrontation and enmity.

"Regrettably, we are often witnesses to latter-day information wars that have enormous destructive power," Mr. Ivanov said. "They are especially dangerous in times of crisis, inciting, in stead of defusing, this or that conflict.

There have been many cases recently when unverified information or outright disinformation circulated through media led to wrong military and political decisions."

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21/4

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# CTBT another victory for Putin

By Vladimir Radyuhin

**MOSCOW, APRIL 21.** The Russian Parliament has overwhelmingly ratified the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT), handing yet another victory to the President-elect, Mr. Vladimir Putin.

A week after Mr. Putin pushed through Parliament ratification of the START II nuclear arms reduction pact, the Lower House, the State Duma, heeded his call to approve the CTBT. The State Duma voted 298-74 on Friday to ratify CTBT, easily overriding Communist objections to the treaty.

"There has been a deliberate movement aimed at depriving Russia of its status as a nuclear power. Banning nuclear tests is just another step in that direction," said Mr. Ivan Nikitchuk, a Communist lawmaker. "It is impossible to verify the safety of nuclear weapons without staging nuclear tests."

However, the Foreign Minister, Mr. Igor Ivanov, the Defence Minister, Marshal Igor Sergeev, and the Nuclear Energy Minister, Mr. Yevgeny Adamov, persuaded deputies to support ratification during three-hour closed-door hearings.

Russian legislators stressed that the ratification had political, rather than practical significance, considering that the CTBT was unlikely to go into effect for quite some time year. They pointed out that the treaty had been signed by more than 150 countries, but of the 44 countries that must ratify the treaty before it takes effect, the U.S. and China are yet to do it, while Pakistan, India and North Korea, have not even signed the pact.

"From the point of view of our obligations, this step has more



**A general view of the State Duma, Russia's lower house of Parliament, in Moscow. The State Duma overwhelmingly approved on Friday the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty. — AP**

political than military-technical relevance," said Mr. Alexei Arbatov, member of the State Duma's

defence committee.

Ratification of the CTBT is expected to give Moscow an edge in

talks with Washington on arms control. "Our approval of CTBT will make it more difficult for the U.S. to walk out of the ABM (Anti-Ballistic Missile) treaty and conduct tests of new types of nuclear weapons," said Mr. Dmitry Rogozin, head of the State Duma's international committee.

Ratification of the CTBT will not affect the staging by Russia of non-nuclear blast tests "to check the safety of the nuclear arsenal," a spokesman for the Russian Atomic Energy Ministry said. Russia has not conducted any nuclear tests after October 1990, but since 1995 has been holding non-nuclear blasts which do not involve any release of nuclear energy and therefore are not covered by the CTBT, the spokesman said. According to the Atomic Energy Ministry, Russia conducted seven non-nuclear tests at its Novaya Zemlya range in 1999. The last such test was conducted in January 2000.

Earlier today, Mr. Putin presided over a meeting of the Security Council, which gave a final stamp of approval to the new military doctrine.

In the words of the Security Council secretary, Mr. Sergei Ivanov, the doctrine demonstrates Russia's resolve to "firmly uphold our national interests in the military sphere by using the entire range of means, forces and resources at our disposal."

The doctrine, according to media reports, states that Russia envisages the possibility of using nuclear weapons to repel "armed aggression if all other means of resolving a crisis situation have been exhausted or turn out to be ineffective."

22 APR 2000

THESE are no left turns in Moscow, or very few. This is not a political observation, but the first rule of driving here and a steady source of income for the city's 80,000 traffic police, whose bribe-taking is an obvious symptom of what ails Vladimir Putin's Russia.

The wretched gaishniki are liable to wave you down with deceptive playful-ness the moment you get behind the wheel. They introduce themselves, explain the no-left-turn rule as if it were the Bill of Rights, and coyly ask what should be done now. The expected answer: "I would like to pay an on-the-spot fine."

This week Russia's parliament, the Duma, started discussing a new traffic code that would give the traffic police 17 new reasons to stop drivers and confiscate their licences. The announcement prompted hysterical warnings of an incipient police state, which is why, for fairness' sake, I recently record being pulled over for three egregious consecutive left turns in *The Times's* red Volvo, easily-identified by its yellow number plate as a foreign sitting duck. The fine was 40.75 roubles (roughly £1), payable at the state savings bank round the corner. A receipt would be provided. It was and I returned with it as instructed to the scene of the crime.

"Akuratno," said the hero cop. "Vsyo khoroshevo." (As it should be. All the best.)

He smiled and saluted from the front seat of his Lada and I spent the rest of the day in a state of stunned euphoria. Maybe he was playing by the rules because he happened to be stationed under the watchful slit windows of the

# Can Putin ever make his people honest?

56-2 vs A  
The Russian President's task is nothing less than the reform of an entire society, writes GILES WHITTELL

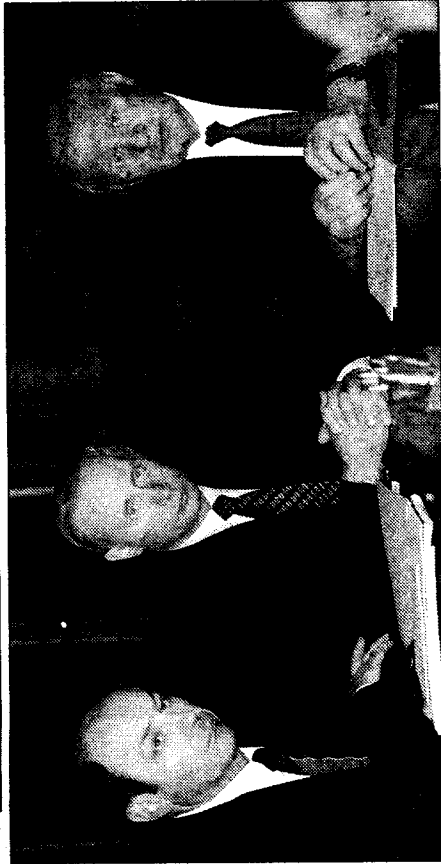
connection with £400 million of missing Aeroflot revenues.

Mr Berezovsky, whose holdings include a large chunk of the O m s k - b a s e d Sibneft oil company, is no stranger to criminal investigations. Mr Putin's readiness to pursue them is seen as a key test of his mettle, and so far he has failed it. Far from retreating, Mr Berezovsky is resurgent since the Putin phenomenon took off. He started

by winning immunity from prosecution with an obscure seat in the Duma. Then he and fellow-oligarch Roman Abramovich took over virtually the entire Russian aluminium industry.

In the meantime Mr Berezovsky has bought himself a £20 million chateau on Cap d'Antibes, and a yacht called Super Toy, in case he finds himself having to spend more time abroad.

Fat chance, as they probably say in Omsk. Mr Putin made much of taking no campaign contributions from the oligarchs, but he has accepted them as a fact of life and undertaken only to keep them at arm's length. He has vowed



tough on the causes of crime" — but in Russia this means nothing less than straightening out an entire society.

Being truly tough on crime in Russia would mean re-examining the records of the oligarchs who enriched themselves prodigiously during the privatisation spree of the mid-1990s and remain some of Russia's most powerful men. It would mean, above all, talking on Boris Berezovsky, who zips around Moscow with a relatively modest retinue of bodyguards in high-powered four-wheel drives while investigators in Switzerland pursue him in

war on corruption and enlisted his alma mater, the secret police, to the cause. But the Federal Security Service is not known for undermining the status quo.

There is a real risk that ordinary Russians and investors in Russia will be thrown a few scapegoats and invited to believe that corruption has been dealt with. This week police hailed a breakthrough the capture of 12 men suspected of trying to smuggle £140 million-worth of gems out of Russia. All well and good, but next to the billions leaving in illegal capital flight, £140 million is small fry.

The danger of a phoney war on corruption mirrors that of an equally phoney one on human rights abuse in the Caucasus. Moscow has arrested one officer who shot a woman at close range for failing to sell him vodka. Another has been charged with the rape and murder of an 18-year-old Chechen girl. But the prospect of senior Russian commanders facing trial for alleged war crimes is as likely as a court martial for General Colin Powell after winning the Gulf War.

If Mr Putin lacks the will to tackle the real obstacles to peace in Chechnya and prosperity in Russia's heartland, they will fester. He must win over, for example, a Chechen who gave me a lift the other day in Moscow; fresh-faced, handsome, with a Russian bullet in his neck from the 1994-96 war. To thank me for reporting on the current one, he refused to take my money. Like honest traffic cops, taxis operated by meters rather than refugees are said to be a litmus test of progress. If so, Moscow has some way to go.

— *The Times, London.*

40-19

# Five Pakistanis detained near Chechnya

By Vladimir Radyuhin

**MOSCOW, APRIL 25.** Five Pakistanis, suspected of trying to join Chechen rebels, have been detained in Russia as they illegally crossed the border from Azerbaijan, Russian security officials said.

The men, said to be residents of Punjab in Pakistan, were apprehended at a railway station in Dagestan, a Russian Republic neighbouring Chechnya. Mr. Gagin Dzarupayev, chief investigator of the Federal Security Service in Dagestan, told Russian state television RTR that the Pakistanis were probably heading for Chechnya to fight on the side of Muslim rebels.

"We suspect them of belonging to Pakistani intelligence," Mr. Dzarupayev said.

The Pakistanis, who had Azerbaijani visas issued in Islamabad on April 18, arrived in Baku, capital of Azerbaijan, by flight from Pakistan on April 20. There they hired a local man who took them

across the border to Dagestan for \$ 500.

Interestingly, Russian television said security officials had asked an Indian student detained earlier in Chechnya to act as an interpreter for the Pakistanis. Mr. Mishra S. Raghunath had been suspected of fighting Russian forces in Chechnya, but now Russian television referred to him as a man who "had been detailed by force in Chechnya." Foreign Ministry sources said no charges had been filed against the Indian and he was being interrogated as only a witness.

Moscow claims hundreds of foreigner mercenaries are fighting in Chechnya, mainly from Muslim countries, such as Afghanistan, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia and Turkey.

The Interfax news agency quoted Russian military sources as saying that another group of Arab mercenaries who had undergone terrorist training in Lebanon was getting ready to cross into Chech-

nya from Georgia, the only post-Soviet republic to have a common border with Chechnya.

Meanwhile, fighting in Chechnya intensified, with rebels ambushing a second Russian military column in three days on Tuesday. General Valery Manilov, chief military spokesman for Chechnya, told Interfax that an armoured personnel carrier had been damaged and one soldier wounded when rebels attacked a Russian reconnaissance unit at the entrance of the Argun Gorge near the foot of Chechnya's southern mountains.

According to verified official reports, 13 Russian paratroopers were killed and six wounded when Chechens ambushed another column on Sunday.

Also today, the Military News Agency AVN quoted Russian military commanders as saying that rebels continued to infiltrate Grozny and there were now 500 militants in the city, including 50 snipers, who now attacked Feder-

al troops not only after night fall, but also in daytime.

Hit-and-run attacks on Russian forces have been on the rise since greenery covered Chechnya earlier this month. The Russian military say there are still about 3,500 rebels active in Chechnya, but the President of the neighbouring Russian Republic of Ingushetia, Mr. Ruslan Aushev, estimates the number of rebels at between 15,000 and 17,000. He told NTV private television on Monday that a guerilla war in Chechnya could go on for "a very long time."

# Russia refuses to amend ABM treaty

WASHINGTON: Russian foreign minister Igor Ivanov urged President Bill Clinton to keep intact the 1972 Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty that Washington wants to change so it can build a National Missile Defence (NMD) system.

"Our position is our security will be better protected if the Treaty is kept intact," Mr Ivanov told reporters after meeting Mr Clinton in the Oval office on Tuesday. Mr Ivanov came to Washington to lay the groundwork for Mr Clinton's first summit meeting with Russian president-elect Vladimir Putin in Moscow on June 4 and 5.

Mr Clinton expressed interest in Putin's plans for economic reform and steps to deal with crime and corruption and strengthening the rule of law, said Mike Hammer, a spokesman for the White House National Security Council. Mr Ivanov's comments on the ABM treaty cast doubt on whether there would be a breakthrough any time soon on it.

In an article in the *New York Times* on Monday, Mr Ivanov repeated a warning that Russia would not feel bound by previous arms control obligations if the U.S. pulls out of the ABM treaty.

Mr Hammer said the U.S. side would not give up trying to convince Russia that a NMD would

not represent a threat to the strategic arms balance. There was a "good, positive tone" to the Ivanov-Clinton meeting, he added.

Mr Ivanov, the first senior official from Moscow to meet Mr Clinton since Mr Putin was elected president, said Russia was ready to listen to any suggestions Mr Clinton might have to bridge the differences between the two countries on the treaty issue.

Talking to reporters, Mr Ivanov said he gave Mr Clinton a letter from Mr Putin saying that he was interested in "constructive relations and dynamic relations in all areas of our interaction," and wanted a dialogue on security issues, regional conflicts and bilateral relations, primarily economic issues.

"The relations between Russia and the U.S. is one of the major components determining the overall climate in the world and our desire is to maintain and continue the calm and appropriate climate for the development of the entire world through our intercourse," he said.

He said while the overall balance in U.S.-Russian relations have been positive in recent years, "it is quite natural" that the two countries will have disagreements, "sometimes of a major scale." (Reuters)

THE TIMES OF INDIA

27 APR 2000

# STATE SECURITY

## Russian Plan For Modernising Armed Forces

By SERGEI IVANOV

NO cardinal changes have been added to the text of Russia's National Security Concept-2000. The concept has taken into account new tendencies in the foreign policy of the US and other Western states, which tried to play the role of judge and executioner in the war against Yugoslavia, having pushed the UN with all its structures into the background. Russia's place and role in resolving global and regional problems has come to the foreground. Some states strive to weaken Russia's influence in all spheres of international life.

Problems related to the development of relations with CIS countries have been more clearly outlined. This is still a priority area. For the first time ever, the concept includes a provision on the danger of possible wars in the information sphere and the extreme importance of ensuring security of the state's information and telecommunication systems. The theses on the guidelines for home policy have been revised.

The concept's provisions in the defence sphere have undergone major corrections. The document stresses that it is inadmissible to further drag out such processes as reforming the country's military organisation and its defence industry complex and defining the basis of Russia's military doctrine. The task of ensuring deterrence in order to avert a nuclear or conventional war has been formulated in a new way. The problem can be settled through the efforts of the entire state. The section related to the country's nuclear forces dwells on combat-ready nuclear forces capable of attaining nuclear deterrence tasks, rather than the nuclear forces' potential.

### TRENDS

A specific feature of Russia's present stage of development is that internal threats to national security have become decisive. External and internal threats are closely intertwined. As in the previous wording of the national security concept, Russia's national interests in the economic sphere are defined as key ones. Serious changes are occurring in the external context. Firstly, the role of force is growing in international relations, and attempts are being made to alter the existing system of ensuring international security in the interests of a narrow group of states.

Secondly, a tendency has emerged towards divergence between Russia's and the US's course in the disarmament and arms control sphere. Thirdly, Russia does not feel that other states have tried adequately to end the Cold War and overcome its consequences. Regrettably, the West wants to cast Russia in the role of a raw-material appendage. Fourthly, there is an unprecedented growth in the activities of international terrorist organisations, which have chosen Russia's territory as a testing ground. Unfortunately, few states realise that by implementing an anti-terrorist operation in Chechnya, Russia has launched a battle against terrorism in the interests of the entire world, including Western countries.

The main directions of mili-

tary development have been written into the fundamentals of the Russian Federation's state policy in military development up to 2005. They are aimed at raising the efficiency of the military organisation, enhancing its moral-psychological condition, and improving its systems of material and technical supplies and social security. The main trends in military development may also include streamlining the system of military control bodies, the structure, composition and numerical strength of the military organisation and a balanced development of its components; reducing the number of ministries and departments which are allowed to have



troops and military units within them; improving the system of manning and training personnel, of military education and science; a structural, technological and qualitative transformation of the material and technical base of the defence industry complex and streamlining the system of social security for servicemen; enhancing servicemen's status, and improving the legal framework for military development.

Under Article 10 of the federal law the main goal of the Russian armed forces is to repel aggression and maintain the inviolability of the frontiers of the federation. In accordance with the national security concept, the use of military force inside the country is permitted in strict compliance with the Russian Federation's Constitution and federal laws.

The draft military doctrine of the Russian Federation provides for establishing, temporarily, joint groups of troops assigned to different departments, as well as bodies controlling these troops when they fulfil tasks aimed at averting internal military conflicts, localising areas of conflicts, and destroying rebel armed formations, gangs and terrorist groups. At present, the general staff is drafting a plan to develop the armed forces of the Russian Federation for the 2000-2005 period.

### TASKS AHEAD

Guidelines for a short-term development of the Armed Forces may include: maintaining the nuclear potential to ensure planned damage to aggressors in any conditions; bringing combat personnel and the numerical strength of the general purpose forces to the level that would ensure the fulfilment by them of the tasks of localising and liquidating armed conflicts and deploying the necessary combat-ready groups of forces; forming an integrated control system of the armed forces on the basis of inter departmental integration; modernising and repairing defence equipment; and upgrading R&D to create a technological base for modern arms manufacture.

These tasks set out in the

new concept should be solved by joint efforts, which presupposes a balanced development of the structures of the armed forces of the Russian Federation. The strategy of our actions in the nuclear deterrence sphere was outlined by the Security Council in 1998, and it was sufficiently covered by the media. In the first half of the year 2000, the Security Council is planning to examine issues concerning a rational balance between nuclear and conventional weapons, which is connected with the drafting of a state armament programme for the 2001-2010 period. When drafting this programme, it is proposed to establish a set of strategic guidelines applicable to the armament system of the armed forces of the federation.

This document sets forth the following approaches to the development of trends in the armed forces: it is planned that the armed forces' structure will be transformed by concentrating forces, means and resources in the three spheres of armed struggle — on land, in the air, including outer space, and at sea; the interior troops are to be converted into a federal internal security militia).

In accordance with the new military-administrative division of the Russian Federation's territory, regional commands of this militia will be formed and the interior troops' districts abolished. The federal frontier service will be developed and later used primarily for non-military forms of service. The federal security service, the federal guard service and the foreign intelligence service will be developed keeping in mind the need to comprehensively resolve the tasks of ensuring the country's defence and security.

### PROGRAMME

The implementation of the programme of planned structural transformation of the Russian Federation's military organisation in full gear is expected to be launched starting with the year 2001. Military security problems as a component of national security have always been within the jurisdiction of the security council, including the examination and submission of the military doctrine of the Russian Federation for endorsement by the Russian President.

In accordance with the President's decision and in compliance with the existing legislation, the security council may consider any issue related to the country's security. Therefore, there is no need to vest any additional powers in the security council in connection with the abolition of the defence council. The defence council was entrusted with the task of implementing major decisions of the security council in the military sphere, and also to elaborate on presidential decisions in the sphere of military reform and military development.

At the same time, the security council's functions have been considerably expanded. It has been entrusted with the task of overseeing the activities of the State Commission of the Russian Federation for Military Development, set up by a presidential decree in May 1998. With this aim in view, a special subdivision made up of specialists in various areas of military development has been formed within the security council's staff.

The author is Secretary, Security Council of the Russian Federation.



# Moscow reaffirms support for Rabbani

By Vladimir Radyuhin

**MOSCOW, MARCH. 1.** Enraged by the Taliban's recognition of Chechnya and military aid to Chechen rebels, Russia reiterated its rejection of the Islamists' bid to control the whole of Afghanistan and reaffirmed support for the Government of Mr. Burhanuddin Rabbani.

Last week, Moscow played host to the acting Foreign Minister of the Rabbani Government, Mr. M. Abdulla, who was received by the Russian Foreign Minister, Mr. Igor Ivanov, and handed him a letter from Mr. Rabbani to Russia's acting President, Mr. Vladimir Putin. A statement for the press issued at the end of the visit condemned the Taliban's "attempts to impose its single-handed rule in the country relying on massive foreign aid."

The statement voiced "grave concern over continuing wide-ranging interference in the internal affairs of Afghanistan and the establishment of a stronghold of international terrorism and extremism, including that of Chechen origin, on the Taliban-controlled territory."

The visit by Mr. Rabbani's Minister to Moscow showed that Russia continued to stand by its support for the anti-Taliban coalition, despite calls by many Russian experts and media to open a dialogue with its leaders. The experts argued that it was time Russia faced the realities in Afghanistan and talked to those who were getting the upper hand in the Afghan civil war.

However, Moscow hardened its hostile attitude towards the Taliban after the latter extended diplomatic recognition to rebel Chechnya earlier this year. The Russian Foreign Ministry accused the Taliban and its patron, Pakistan, of forging "a chain of international terrorism." Moscow also accused the Taliban of training Chechen militants at military camps in Afghanistan and sending Mujahideen men to fight Russian forces in Chechnya. Last month, Russian authorities said

the Taliban were organising a new rebel training centre in Mazar-e-Sharif for Chechnya-bound militants arriving from United Arab Emirates. Moscow said the militants were sent to Chechnya via Pakistan, Turkey and Turkmenistan.

Moscow also perceives the Taliban as an acute threat to post-Soviet States of Central Asia. Last year, Afghan-trained Islamists temporarily occupied a mountainous area in Kyrgyzstan and staged several bomb blasts in Tashkent, capital of Uzbekistan.

The latest issue of *Military Review*, published by the Russian Defence Ministry said extremist Islamic centres operating in the Afghan provinces of Balkh and Kunduz, posed a serious security threat to Central Asian States bordering Afghanistan. The *Military Review* drew special attention to Afghanistan-based Uzbek Islamists led by Takhir Yuldashiev, who sought to undermine the Governments in Tajikistan, Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan through acts of sabotage and terror. The mouthpiece of the Russian military urged greater economic and military aid to the anti-Taliban coalition.

"It will be far cheaper for the CIS (Commonwealth of Independent States) countries to set up and maintain a cordon sanitaire in northern Afghanistan... than come face to face with militant Islamic fundamentalists," the *Military Review* said. The warm welcome accorded in Moscow to Mr. Rabbani's envoy is a sure sign that Russia will continue massive military aid to the Northern Alliance forces which is fighting the Taliban.

The Russian statement on the visit of the Afghan envoy to Moscow also voiced concern over the emergence of the Taliban as "the main source of drugs in the world." U.N. officials have estimated that Afghanistan produces 75 per cent of the world's illicit opium, most of which is pouring into Central Asia and Russia.

# Europeans sceptical over Putin's remark on NATO membership

By Batuk Gathani

**BRUSSELS, MARCH 6.** Eyebrows were raised in the chancelleries of the 16 member countries of NATO over Russia's acting President, Mr. Vladimir Putin's statement on Sunday that his country wanted to become a full member of the Western military alliance. Mr. Putin had said that Russia was willing to join the alliance as long as the "strong and powerful" Russia was regarded as "an equal partner".

Western analysts are wondering whether this is a carefully crafted diplomatic ploy or the Russian leader is genuine. Mr. Putin is seen as trying to mend Russia's diplomatic and strategic fences with the

West, after triumphantly concluding the military campaign in Chechnya where the revolt by secessionist militants appears to have been contained.

Russian, European and American officials met in Lisbon on Friday when Moscow approved the visit of the President of the Red Cross to Chechnya this week. It is also argued that Western Governments have deliberately muted their criticism and condemnation of Russia's handling of the situation in Chechnya for fear of further alienating Mr. Putin, who is rated as the favourite to win the presidential election on March 26.

Last week, visiting Foreign Ministers

from the Group of Seven countries were warmly received in Moscow. Now that Mr. Putin has overtly speculated about the prospects of Russia becoming a member of NATO, the event has triggered a major debate about Russia's strategic aspirations and logistical strategy in Europe of the 21st century.

The European Union countries are already working on creating an independent European military force to be deployed where European security is threatened. This is causing some concern in the U.S. and at NATO headquarters here. According to U.S. officials, this may gradually erode American defence guar-

antees and perhaps leave the European continent exposed to new threats of instability. The question is: from where will such threats of instability come if Russia also becomes a full member of NATO?

Mr. Putin stated that Russia may join NATO after restructuring and consolidating its ailing economy. In the recent past, Russia has expressed grave reservations with NATO's strategy of expanding eastward. Poland, the Czech Republic and Hungary, the three key former communist-ruled countries, are slated to become full members of NATO and Mr. Putin said this should not be conducted without taking Russia's strategic interests

into consideration. Mr. Putin's observation that Russia could "soon" join NATO as an "equal partner" is also interpreted as an attempt to reduce domestic tensions over NATO's expansion and Russia's condemnation of NATO's recent military campaign in Yugoslavia against the Government of the President, Mr. Slobodan Milosevic, on the pretext of halting alleged "ethnic cleansing" in Kosovo.

This was acceptable neither to major Western powers nor to Russia, but their perceptions differed over the role and strategy of Serbian nationalists led by Mr. Milosevic to contain the ethnic crisis.

# Russia does not fear US: Putin

**Moscow, March 8:** Russia's acting, Mr President Vladimir Putin, has pooh-poohed any American threat to Russian security by saying that "if the Americans know that one-third of our missiles can reach the United States in response to its strike, no one will dare attack us," the daily *Komosloskaye Pravda* reports.

In a long-ranging interview to the daily President Vladimir Putin and national security council secretary general Sergei Ivanov slammed attempts to portray President Vladimir Putin's image as a threat to democracy saying that "lately everyone came to realise that Russia has lost its voice, but suddenly it became clear that we are able to

AA-5  
snap back, who can like this?" he asked. Earlier in a televised interview President Vladimir Putin said that he had no liking for the pageantry of the job in the KGB

and recalled that Soviet propaganda never laid emphasis on the pageantry but concentrated on patriotism and the "love for one's native land". Mr Putin is a strong

contender for Russia's presidential elections and has been under constant attacks from the intelligentsia at home in particular and the west in general on the eve of the March 26 contest for the top slot in Kremlin. Mr Ivanov was more forthright in his criticism of the charges of revival of Stalinism and threat of dictatorship in Russia.

He reminded the critics that those in the KGB were the cream of the society, a fact which is conceded by father of Russian Hydrogen Bomb Andrei Sakharov.

He is on record to have said "KGB is the only organisation for which I have some respect" and Mr Ivanov recalled the same. (Reuters)

## Rights violations trouble Annan

**United Nations, March 8:** UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan said on Tuesday there were troubling questions about human rights in Chechnya, and he welcomed a planned visit to the region by the top UN human rights official. Mr Annan told a news conference that during a recent Asian trip he "kept hearing and seeing very disturbing reports of what was happening in Chechnya, and the terrible destruction and suffering caused by the hostilities."

Besides the humanitarian crisis, "there are very troubling questions about violations of human rights and humanitarian law," he added. He supported the emphasis placed by the UN high commissioner for human rights, former Irish President Mary Robinson, on ensuring an international human rights. (Reuters)

THE ASIAN AGE

- 9 MAR 2000

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## Russia denies atrocities in Chechnya

MOSCOW: Russian troops were reported on Tuesday to have raised the country's tricolour flag over a key village in rebel Chechnya after more than two weeks of fierce fighting.

The battle for the strategic village of Komsomolskoye, lying at the mouth of the Argun gorge, which leads into Chechnya's southern mountains, has cost Russia some of its heaviest casualties in the six-month-old campaign.

NTV commercial television said the Russian flag was flying above the village, wrecked by constant air raids and artillery attacks. Russia's Interfax news agency fell short of saying troops have taken the village but it said tanks had crushed the last pockets of resistance there.

It said the military was expecting about 150 rebels to surrender after 76 laid down their arms on Monday. Leading Chechen commander Ruslan Gelayev was reported still to be holed up in Komsomolskoye. Russia has said before that it was near to taking the village but rebel resistance continued to flare up. Further south along the Argun gorge, Russian jet fighters and helicopters bombed rebel positions.

Some 1,500 rebels were hiding in the remote southern mountains out of a total remaining force of 2,500, Interfax quoted the military as saying. Some were moving east towards neighbouring Dagestan, hoping to escape across the border.

Acting President Vladimir Putin, whose popularity ahead of a March 26 election has soared thanks to his waging the Chechen campaign, has said Russia aims to destroy the rebels. He made a pre-election stunt on Monday by flying down to Chechnya in a fighter jet of the type which has attacked the rebels.

The war, popular in Russia, has been criticised in the West for widespread civilian suffering. Allegations that Russian troops carried out atrocities have also been levelled.

However, the military prosecutor's office said it had determined that no army troops had taken part in the murder of civilians in a district in the Chechen capital Grozny, although it could not speak for interior ministry troops.

"Russian soldiers took no part in atrocities in Aldi," a spokesman said. "That does not mean they did not happen, or that other federal forces were not involved." Interior ministry troops also serve in the campaign.

Human rights groups have said around 130 civilians died at the hands of Russian forces in the village of Alkhan-Yurt and in two districts of the Chechen capital Grozny — Staropromyslovsky in January and Aldi in February.

Ruslan Aushev, president of the Ingushetia Republic bordering Chechnya to the West, said refugees continued to cross the frontier but faced a growing food shortage. (Reuters)

THE TIMES OF INDIA  
22 MAR 2000

Russia adopts  
new foreign  
policy  
SCM  
REUTERS 25/3

MOSCOW, March 24. — Russia's advisory security council today approved a new foreign policy concept that calls for stronger protection of Russian citizens abroad and for a more commercially-oriented diplomacy.

The foreign minister, Mr Igor Ivanov, told reporters after the council meeting that the doctrine reflected Russia's resources and needs better than the 1993 version. "The new concept is closer to life and to the tasks we are trying to resolve in the country."

Mr Ivanov gave no details, but the acting President Mr Vladimir Putin, who chaired the meeting, made clear the concept included looking after the interests of Russians living abroad, especially in the former Soviet republics.

"We have to defend in a more attentive, balanced but also more active way the interests of our citizens...who have chosen to live permanently in other countries," Mr Putin said.

It is a common complaint of Russian nationalists that Russians stranded in the Baltic states, Ukraine, the Caucasus region and Central Asia after the the USSR broke-up are facing discrimination and mistreatment.

THE STATESMAN  
25 MAR 2000

# Pak. confirms letting in Chechen official

By Vladimir Radyuhin

**MOSCOW, FEB. 5.** Pakistan's embassy in Moscow has confirmed reports that a Chechen rebel official was in Islamabad last week but denied he had secretly met Pakistani leaders.

The Itar-Tass news agency on Saturday quoted a statement for the press issued by the Pakistani embassy as saying that "(Zelimkhan) Yandarbiyev was arrested and interrogated by local authorities in Islamabad on Tuesday." Mr. Yandarbiyev, former acting President of the breakaway Chechnya, was appointed Chechnya's "ambassador" to Kabul last month, following the Taliban's recognition of Russia's rebel region.

Referring to press reports that Mr. Yandarbiyev had a secret meeting with Pakistan's leadership in Islamabad, the embassy stated that "no such meeting took place."

On Friday, the Russian Foreign Ministry asked Islamabad for "an official reaction to our request how Yandarbiyev and his associates arrived on Pakistani territory, what documents they used and how they received visas." However, the embassy statement failed to answer any of these questions. It merely said that after interrogation, Mr. Yandarbiyev "was released."

Moreover, the embassy virtually refuted press reports, cited in the Russian Foreign Ministry statement, that Mr. Yandarbiyev had been deported from Pakistan. The embassy statement just mentioned that Mr. Yandarbiyev "told the local press that he was leaving Pakistan."

Meanwhile, Moscow made it

clear that deportation of Mr. Yandarbiyev was an acid test for Pakistan's stand on Chechnya. "Official Islamabad has repeatedly stated that Pakistan regards Chechnya as an integral part of the Russian Federation and had no intention of interfering in its internal affairs," the Russian statement said. "If reports of the deportation of Z. Yandarbiyev and his accomplices are true, this would confirm the Pakistani authorities' declared position on developments in North Caucasus."

Russia has also warned other countries, especially Pakistan's neighbours, against letting in Mr. Yandarbiyev. "The presence of Z. Yandarbiyev on their territory will be considered in Moscow as an unfriendly gesture and will inevitably complicate bilateral state-to-state relations," the Foreign Ministry said.

Russia last week accused Pakistan of harbouring extremist groups on its territory and criticised Islamabad's failure to oppose the recognition of Chechnya by the Taliban. Pakistan responded by accusing Moscow of "gross interference" in its internal affairs.

In an interview to the *Novyie Izvestia* daily on Saturday, Pakistan's ambassador in Moscow, Mr. Mansur Alam, dismissed as "ludicrous" suggestions that Islamabad could have prevented the Taliban's recognition of Chechnya. "If we had an effective instrument of influencing the Taliban, as Russia appears to think, they would have long received a U.N. seat, instead of dubious dividends from such an emotional and incomprehensible gesture towards the Chechens," the envoy said.

THE HINDU

- 6 FEB 2000

# Russia calls off visit by NATO chief

By Vladimir Radyuhin  
**MOSCOW, FEB. 8.** In another sign of Russia's continuing clash with the West over Chechnya, Moscow called off a planned visit by the NATO Secretary-General, Mr. George Robertson, to the Russian capital amid reports that a hardline general is about to be appointed Russia's new Defence Minister.

The Interfax news agency quoted "military-diplomatic sources" in Moscow as saying that the visit of the NATO chief scheduled for Feb. 16 was "unlikely to take place." The sources told Interfax that "proposals G. Robertson planned to take to Russia were not of a constructive character."

The cancellation of the NATO

visit coincided with reports that Russia's aging Defence Minister, Marshall Igor Sergeev, is about to be replaced by the former Border Guards commander, General Andrei Nikolayev, 50, who has a reputation of a nationalist. Gen. Nikolayev resigned from the Border Guards in December 1997, after the then President, Mr. Boris Yeltsin, refused to support his hard stand on the issue of cracking down on massive alcohol smuggling from Georgia.

Marshal Sergeev, who reached the retirement age of 60 last year, was widely expected to go this year. According to the *Moskovsky Komsomolets* daily, the acting President, Mr. Vladimir Putin, accepted Marshal Sergeev's resig-

nation at a Cabinet meeting last Friday and told the Cabinet of his plan to replace him with Gen. Nikolayev.

The cancellation of the NATO chief's visit may be linked to the coming appointment of Gen. Nikolayev as Russia's Defence Minister. Gen. Nikolayev advocated the kind of military solution to the problem of Chechnya's separatism that Mr. Putin is now implementing.

NATO's strong criticism of the Russian military operation in Chechnya has apparently caused Moscow to rethink its plans to resume contacts with the Atlantic Alliance suspended after the latter's attack on Yugoslavia.

"The Russian side is linking the

'unfreezing' of relations with NATO with the alliance's readiness to view Moscow as a serious partner, rather than an observer in the matters of European security," the military-diplomatic sources told Interfax commenting on the cancellation of Mr. Robertson's visit to Moscow.

"We would like to discuss concrete aspects of European security and each other's concerns, rather than questions of protocol nature," the sources said.

In a television interview on Monday, in which he announced the capture of the Chechen capital Grozny, Mr. Putin complained that Western leaders had failed to comprehend the depth of the Chechnya problem.

# Russia to resume ties with NATO

FD-16

By Vladimir Radyuhin 197

**MOSCOW, FEB. 16.** Russia and NATO agreed to revive bilateral contacts freezed after NATO's air war against Yugoslavia last year.

The Russian Foreign Minister, Mr. Igor Ivanov, announced the resumption of relations after the visiting NATO Secretary-General, Mr. George Robertson, met the Acting President, Mr. Vladimir Putin, in the Kremlin on Wednesday.

In a surprise volte-face, Moscow played host to Mr. Robertson, merely a week after hinting the visit could be cancelled because of persisting differences between the two sides.

The NATO chief, who arrived in Moscow on Tuesday night for a one-day working visit, also met the Russian Defence Minister, Marshall Igor Sergeev, and Mr. Ivanov.

It was Mr. Putin who is believed to have overruled the Russian military's objections to Mr. Robertson's visit. Last week the First Deputy Chief of the General Staff, Gen. Valery Manilov, said Mr. Robertson's visit was likely to be postponed and would only be feasible if he brought "acceptable proposals" on resuming cooperation with Russia.

The Russian military dug its heels against reviving contacts with NATO as the alliance condemned Russia's war in Chechnya further antagonising the Russian top military brass. Even as the NATO chief arrived in

Moscow, Gen. Leonid Ivashov, head of international relations at the Russian Defence Ministry, told reporters that "there's no question of a full-scale unfreezing of bilateral relations."

However, Mr. Putin took the side of the Foreign Ministry, which insisted on resuming dialogue with NATO.

"The very fact of your visit here shows that NATO is attaching much importance to relations with Russia," Mr. Putin said opening his meeting with the NATO Secretary-General. "For our part, we are willing to develop these relations, though I must say that after events in Yugoslavia such questions are not easily decided in our country."

Mr. Robertson's visit came amid signs that the West was trying to heal a rift in relations with Russia. On Monday the US President, Mr. Bill Clinton, praised Mr. Putin as "a very strong, effective, straightforward leader," with whom "the United States can do business." Moscow welcomed the statement as "constructive" and said it "shares the U.S. President's expressed wish to activate bilateral dialogue, particularly in the fields of security and disarmament."

"Russian diplomacy does not think that the state of permafrost in relations with NATO is normal and consistent with the interests of European security," said Mr. Ivanov after talks with Mr. Robertson.

THE HINDU  
17 FEB 2000



# Pak asks Chechen ex-President to leave

UNITED NEWS OF INDIA

ISLAMABAD, Feb. 22. — Pakistan has asked the visiting former Chechen President, Mr Zelim Khan Yandrabaye, to cease his activities forthwith and leave the country immediately.

Mr Zelim Khan arrived in Pakistan a few weeks back and addressed a number of public meetings.

He also addressed Friday prayer congregations along with Jamaat-i-Islami leaders.

Mr Zelim Khan had been urging Pakistan to recognise Chechnya and asked for funds for his government.

One of the aides of Mr Zelim Khan told reporters, "We have been asked to pack up and leave."

The order was passed on to Chechen leader in Peshawar yesterday.

The spokesman of foreign office, Mr Tariq Altaf, however, said that the Chechen leader has been asked to leave the country in view of the expiry of his visa.

It is learnt that Mr Zelim Khan, instead of leaving for Kabul will go to Dubai to meet his wife and children. Afghanistan is the only country in the world which has recognised Chechnya.

**Saudi national held:** Pakistan is holding for questioning a Saudi Arabian national who was trying to cross into Afghanistan without an Afghan visa, a government official said today, adds AP.

The man — identified by local authorities as Farhan Anazi (30) — was arrested on Saturday at the border post of Torkham, some 50 km. from Peshawar, the official said.

Anazi arrived in Pakistan on Friday from Saudi Arabia and tried to cross the next day into Afghanistan without an Afghan visa, the official said. He has been held for questioning. Pakistani authorities are

particularly cautious because of international concerns, particularly from the USA, about the presence of Osama Bin Laden next door in Afghanistan.

**Sharif recovery:** — Pakistan's deposed Prime Minister, Mr Nawaz Sharif, had commandeered 62 police vehicles for his family's use at his Raiwind estate near Lahore, adds DPA.

The local newspaper *Jung* said the Army found 17 cars and 45 motorcycles of the police department at the estate. It quoted officials as saying that Mr Sharif's action hampered the police's ability to fight crime in Lahore.

# Russia counters Western charge

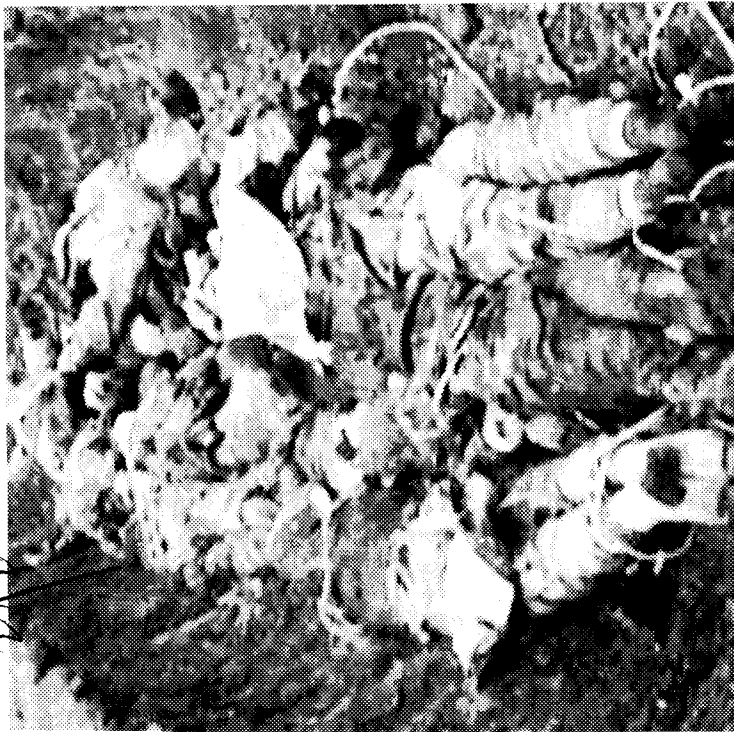
By Vladimir Radyuhin

**MOSCOW, FEB. 26.** Russia has scored important points in its information war with the West over the five-month-long military operation in Chechnya, exposing a false Western report of Russian atrocities in Chechnya and locating a long-missing reporter, whose disappearance was blamed on Russian forces in the region.

The Moscow daily *Izvestia* today accused the German N24 TV station of falsifying a gory footage of two mass graves filled with mutilated bodies that had been shown by major world channels on Friday. The paper said the footage had been shot by its own reporter in Chechnya, who then sold the film to Pro-7, the parent TV station of N24. Stills from both films published in *Izvestia* on Saturday appeared to prove they were identical. The daily said the original film was authentic, but claimed that N24's commentary on it was false.

According to the *Izvestia* correspondent, Mr. Oleg Blotsky, the dead bodies on his film belonged to Chechen rebels killed by Russian artillery as they tried to break out of the Chechen capital Grozny, not to peaceful Chechens tortured and murdered by Russian forces, as N24 claimed. While this fact did not make the footage any less macabre, *Izvestia* said it was common practice for Russian troops to temporarily bury the bodies of rebels for possible identification by relatives later.

Russian officials from the very beginning said the film was a fake. N24, which first claimed the footage had been videotaped by its correspondent, Mr. Frank Hoc-



**The bodies of Chechen fighters, their ankles bound with wire, lie in a ditch at an undisclosed location, in the footage provided by a German TV station and broadcast on Russian television on Friday. — AP**

fling, later admitted it had been purchased. Western media and human rights organisations rushed to welcome the film as first documented proof of large-scale atrocities committed by Russian forces in Chechnya. The release of the film coincided with a visit to Russia by the Council of European Human Rights Commissioner, Mr. Alvaro Gil-Robles, who came to investigate human rights violations in Chechnya.

In another propaganda coup for Moscow, a Russian reporter, whose fate aroused international concern after he disappeared in

Chechnya, reappeared in the neighbouring Russian region of Dagestan on Friday night. Mr. Andrei Babitsky, whose reports from rebel-held Chechnya had infuriated Moscow, was detained by Russian forces near Grozny last month. Officials later said the reporter had agreed to be exchanged for the Russian soldiers, but Chechen commanders denied knowledge of any such deal. Many analysts believed the swap was a trick to keep the reporter away from the public eye or even a prelude to killing him and blaming his death on Chechen rebels.

However, on Friday, Mr. Babitsky, in good health, resurfaced in Dagestan and was detained by police for carrying a false passport issued in the name of a citizen of Azerbaijan, Mr. Ali Musayev. The journalist was reported as saying the people who had been holding him captive planned to smuggle him to Azerbaijan, which has a common border with Dagestan.

Reuters reports:

The Russian Foreign Minister, Mr. Igor Ivanov, said in televised remarks yesterday that technical problems concerning a trip by the visiting Council of Europe Human Rights Commissioner, Mr. Alvaro Gil-Robles, to Chechnya had been resolved.

Itar-Tass news agency quoted Russia's Commissioner for Human Rights in Chechnya, Mr. Vladimir Kalamonov, as saying Mr. Gil-Robles could visit refugee camps in Ingushetia and the Chechen capital Grozny. Some Government officials said the trip to Grozny could take place on Monday.

## NUCLEAR TRIGGER

516 Russia addresses security concerns

WHAT is the provocation for radically reshaping Russia's national security perspective? Several factors, both long term and short term, must be at work. In the short term there is the problem in the Caucasus region. The Chechen problem appeared to have settled down, until Islamic fundamentalist elements started using Chechnya as a base to foment trouble in Dagestan. The merits of the Caucasian claim for independence or autonomy is not the point. From the Russian perspective, quite clearly, it is difficult to allow fissiparous tendencies to continue unabated. The region is of particular importance because it is rich in oil reserves. Any relaxation of control from Moscow will give Nato the opportunity to get its foot in the door. That is the second factor. Russia, not unfairly, is apprehensive of Nato's motives. Nato has been trying to push its influence into eastern Europe at the cost of Russia in this area. More than humanitarian solicitude, that was the most important motive for the airstrikes against Yugoslavia over the Kosovo issue. That became clear when Russian forces moved into Pristina airport after the airstrikes ended, but before Nato could move in. Though Nato backed down and let them stay on, there was considerable tension. The issue quite clearly was that of control over the area — and Russia's action was clearly indicative of its suspicion of Nato designs close to its borders. The new security document makes this quite clear when it says that it favours a multipolar world order, with strong regional powers, rather than one dominated by the US.

The other important factor that could have influenced Russia's change of policy is domestic politics. The presidential elections are round the corner. As of now, Putin's popularity ratings are high. But he has one opponent — the Communist, Gennady Zyuganov. Any suspicion that Russian interests are not receiving adequate attention is bound to hurt Putin's prospects. This is especially true in the context of the Chechnyan war. Earlier, it seemed that the war was going well for Russia. Now it appears that the campaign will last longer than the Russians would have us believe, and Russian casualties are much higher than is being let on. Media scrutiny is directed in these areas. Putin, therefore, sends the signal that he is a strong President and will not compromise Russian interests. He is redefining strategic interests, especially by liberalising the nuclear option. What Putin means when he says that the threshold for using nuclear weapons is being lowered is not clear. What is clear is that Russia will not be foolish enough to even think of using nuclear weapons other than in very extreme situations — given its dependence on the West. This move must then be a signal to Nato and the US to keep out of the region. But Putin should realise that nuclear brinkmanship is the wrong way to address security concerns.

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# Russian military doctrine: Pak loses out to India

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
MOSCOW, JAN 16

RUSSIA'S new military doctrine, propounded amidst a devastating war against Islamic rebels in Chechnya, singles out India and China as 'strategic partners' with whom Moscow would seek greater military and defence cooperation in future.

"The final draft of the new military doctrine has identified top priorities in Russia's military and defence cooperation with foreign coun-

tries, which will be accorded to Belarus, CIS countries, traditional and strategic partners India and China and some other countries," first deputy Chief of General Staff, Colonel-General Valery Manilov, was quoted as saying by *Itar-Tass*. The new doctrine is to be adopted in February.

The only significant omission from the list of strategic partners is Pakistan, whom Moscow accuses of supporting Islamic rebels in Chechnya fighting against Russian troops. Thousands of Russian troops have been killed in the war

that broke out after rebels occupied the loyal Soviet Republic of Dagestan in August last year.

Manilov was quoted as saying Russia regards all the nations of the world as partners "except those, who act outside the framework of the UN charter, hatch and implement aggressive plans against her and her allies." Russia has on several occasions directly accused Pakistan of supporting Chechen rebels and encouraging anti-Russia and anti-India terrorism in the name of Islam.

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# 110-16 Russia to resume arms trade with Iran

By Vladimir Radyuhin

**MOSCOW, JAN. 16.** Russia may resume arms supplies to Iran, which were suspended four years ago under pressure from the United States.

Defence cooperation between the two countries was discussed at talks in Moscow last week between Russia's Defence Minister, Marshal Igor Sergeev, and Mr. Hassan Rowhani, Secretary of Iran's Supreme National Security Council.

Talking to mediapersons after the talks, Marshal Sergeev said Russia "intends to maintain the dynamics of its bilateral ties with Iran in the military, military-technical, scientific-technical and energy fields," the Interfax news agency reported.

"Military-technical ties" is the official term used by Russian arms traders to describe defence supplies. The news came several days after Russia's acting President, Mr. Vladimir Putin, approved new national security and military doctrines which call for expanding defence cooperation with India, China and Russia's other "allies and strategic partners" to oppose the U.S.'s "unipolar" domination of the world.

"The Defence Minister's statement means that Moscow feels itself free from certain commitments to Washington and, in particular, is going to unilaterally renounce the 1995 Russian-U.S. protocol," the influential business daily *Kommersant* commented.

Under the 1995 memorandum signed by the then Russian Prime Minister, Mr. Viktor Chernomyrdin, and the U.S. Vice-President, Mr. Al Gore, Russia pledged to refrain from signing any new arms

contracts with Iran, while continuing to honour old ones, which were to be completed by the end of 1999. In exchange, Russia's space industry got lucrative orders for launches of U.S. satellites.

Iran is believed to have purchased \$ 4-billion worth of Russian-made arms between 1988 and 1995. These included several Kilo-class submarines, S-200 air defence systems, Su-24 and MiG-29 aircraft.

"Teheran could order more than \$ 3.5 billion worth of Russian-made weaponry in the next 10 years if restrictions were lifted," Mr. Alexei Malashenko of the Moscow Carnegie Centre said. Among the weapons likely to be ordered by Iran are MiG-29 fighters, Su-27 attack aircraft, Mi-12 helicopters, MSTA-S self-propelled artillery systems, Igla shoulder-fired anti-aircraft missiles, and radar and naval armaments, according to reports in the Russian press.

Interfax had said on Friday that Moscow would supply five MI-171 helicopters to Iran. The MI-171 was described in the report as "civilian," but is in fact a military transport helicopter that can also be used for providing fire support to troops on the ground.

Russia and Iran are also discussing expanding their cooperation in the nuclear field. After talks with Mr. Rowhani, Russia's Deputy Prime Minister, Mr. Ilya Klebanov, said Russia could supply three more light-water nuclear reactors to Iran, in addition to one Russian engineers are already building at the Bushehr nuclear research site in southern Iran under the 1995 contract worth \$ 800 millions. Washington has strongly objected to the deal.

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# Pakistan harbouring extremists: Moscow

By Vladimir Radyuhin

**MOSCOW, JAN. 27.** Russia has blasted Pakistan for engaging in cross-border terrorism against India and harbouring extremist groups on its territory.

The Russian Foreign Ministry said recent reports of renewed tension on the LoC in Kashmir was causing Moscow's 'justified concern' and lending more credibility to India's claims linking Pakistan to international terrorism.

"Moscow is compelled to state that Delhi's accusations against Islamabad of engaging in cross-border are beginning to appear more and more well-founded," the Foreign Ministry said in a strongly-worded statement issued on Thursday.

"Despite Pakistan's official condemnation of terrorism in all its forms and manifestations, an array of extremist organisations openly calling for 'Jihad' against sovereign States continue to act in an unhindered way on Pakistani territory," the statement said.

Moscow's anger against Pakistan was also prompted by the latter's failure to condemn the Taliban's recognition of break-away Chechnya, which the Russian Foreign Ministry described as "yet another link in the emerging chain of transnational terrorism."

"In the absence of a clear-cut official reaction from the Pakistani administration to the opening of a Chechen embassy' in Kabul, we are ever less inclined to take on trust the assertions that the [Pakistani] authorities have no control over extremist and terrorist groups based in Pakistan and assertions about the so-called 'full independence' of the Taliban," the Russian Foreign Ministry said. "Such assertions can only serve to justify a lack of will to support declared rejection of terrorism by concrete deeds."

Earlier this month, Moscow denounced the Taliban's recognition of Chechen rebels as an attempt "to create a bandit international." Thursday's statement was Moscow's harshest criticism of Pakistan in decades.

"If the Pakistani military is really unable to control the growing illegal activities of extremist groups, a more worrying question arises about who in reality sets the 'rules of the game' there [in Pakistan]," Moscow said. "The rapid growth of inter-ethnic and inter-confessional radicalism, separatism and terrorism in Pakistan may have the most serious consequences for the stability of all the countries in the region without exception, as indeed for Pakistan's own statehood."