

"We were told that we wouldn't get any more grain. Please, don't let your aid [the food aid to the Soviet Union] be used as a weapon."

As Landsbergis was making his appeals, it was clear to the average Soviet television viewer that something big was in the works. On Dec. 8, Soviet television gave extensive coverage to a minuscule anti-independence demonstration that day in the Lithuanian capital of Vilnius. The broadcaster read out the demonstration's demand for the creation of a "transition government representing all the democratic forces," whose task would be to "restore order." The broadcast further accused President Landsbergis of having "betrayed the people" and having set up in Lithuania a "totalitarian, nationalist system based on the pre-war model." The broadcast amounted to support for a coup to overthrow the government of independent Lithuania.

The White House's response to the intimidation against Lithuania was to say that it hoped the Soviet Union would not use "threats, intimidation," or military intervention against Lithuania. Then, ever so careful not to blame Moscow for anything, the White House "regretted" that "tensions still exist between the Baltic states and the central government." A more calculated insult against Landsbergis could not be imagined, by backing Moscow's illegal claim that it is, for Lithuania, a "central government," rather than an occupying power.

The timetable for Moscow's confrontation with the Baltic republics is now shaping up as follows. Gorbachov will deliver a report to the U.S.S.R. Congress of People's Deputies when it convenes on Dec. 17, and in it will demand the "constitutional" ratification of presidential emergency powers. He will demand that all republics commit themselves in principle to accepting the new Union Treaty. He will then allow about two weeks for a reply, and come January, the confrontation with the Baltic and other republics will be on.

Outrages in Ukraine

Moscow is coupling its assault against the Baltic republics with a phased escalation against the pro-independence forces of Ukraine, centered in the Ukrainian national movement, Rukh. The attack on Ukraine's patriots took a very ugly turn with the arrest in early December of Stepan Khmara, a Rukh member of the Ukrainian Parliament. Khmara had begun a hunger strike on Nov. 26, in protest against new laws passed by the Parliament's Communist majority, banning demonstrations in the center of Kiev, the capital, and banning any demonstrations on weekdays.

The arrest resulted from a staged "incident" at the site of his hunger strike, when a colonel of the Soviet Interior Troops, in civilian clothes and thus not recognizable as an officer, began beating a woman supporter of the hunger striker. Khmara and others rushed to her assistance, and police showed up and arrested him for attacking the colonel. Now Khmara, through the combined effects of the hunger strike

Ukrainian appeal to the parliaments of the world

Here is the full text of the appeal issued on Dec. 5 by the Ukrainian Parliament's bloc of anti-Bolshevik deputies, the Narodna Rada.

The Narodna Rada, the opposition in the Parliament of the sovereign Republic of Ukraine, turns to all parliaments of the world with an appeal to help us in our striving to secure the release from prison of **Stepan Khmara**—a fighter for human rights, a former prisoner of conscience, an initiator of the Helsinki Human Rights Movement, who has been imprisoned as a result of an illegal decision of the Supreme Soviet of Ukraine.

The unprecedented arrest of this parliamentary deputy within the walls of Parliament we view as a return to neo-Stalinism, to the infamous trials of Daniel and Sinyavsky, Bukovsky and Yuri Orlov, Dzhemilev and Vasyl Stus, Mirab Kostava and Zviad Gamsakhurdia, and the trampling of Andrei Sakharov's testament.

We ask you to help in saving the life of this person, who declared a hunger strike on Nov. 26, 1990, and is now close to death.

Democracy in Ukraine is in peril! Help defend human rights!

and prison, is reported close to death.

If Moscow gets away with the arrest of Khmara, it can and will act likewise against other parliamentary deputies in the non-Russian republics.

Moscow's next escalation in Ukraine was not long in coming. A demonstration of 5,000 in Kiev on Dec. 9, called to demand the release of Khmara from prison, was forced to disperse through intimidation by over 1,000 police and Interior Troops, complete with armored personnel carriers, water cannons, arms, and clubs. Faced by such force, the crowd, which included many women and some children, decided to end the demonstration.

Moscow's ability to get away with such brutality is a direct function of the dirty deal that it has struck with Washington and London, both of which have granted Russia's leadership a free hand to do as it pleases against the freedom-fighter victims of Yalta in the non-Russian republics. No better proof of the betrayal of freedom and the hypocrisy of the Bush administration can be provided, than contrasting its neocolonial policy in the Gulf and its policy concerning the Baltic and other independence-seeking republics.