

## Gorbachov gets mandate to smash freedom movements

by Konstantin George

The Dec. 17 keynote speech of Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachov, which opened a decisive session of the U.S.S.R. Congress of People's Deputies, proved that he has endorsed the demands of the military, the KGB, and Russian national political forces, to use all emergency powers and means, including force, to prevent the process of dissolution along national lines from going out of control.

Lyndon LaRouche, in a statement issued on Dec. 16, warned that the Soviet crisis makes this the "most dangerous moment in 20th-century history" (see article, page 00). All signs point to a very ugly neo-Stalinist turn in the making, unless the West intervenes with a comprehensive program for economic development, in the interests of all the republics concerned.

Gorbachov's speech at the Congress was the toughest he has ever given against "separatists and nationalists." Its contents were known in advance to the main power blocs among the deputies, and this formed the basis for his winning an initial vote of confidence, held before he spoke, by a lopsided margin of 1,288-426.

The key passages which define his mandate to, in his words, prevent "the breakup of the state," and reign as President exercising tough emergency powers, were: "The partisan-like moves by republics and other parts of the state to change their legal status unilaterally, is leading us to chaos. . . . Decisive steps must be undertaken to stop the destructive advances of separatist and nationalist forces."

A confrontation against non-Russian republics, above all in the Baltic, is a near-future certainty.

The mandate given to Gorbachov is conditional, and could dissolve at any point. It marks his last chance to act, and he will be held accountable for getting the country out of the crisis. This was made clear in two statements issued

by the powerful Soyuz group of more than 500 deputies, which acts as the political spearhead for the military, security forces, and Russian nationalists. The Soyuz group voted for Gorbachov, and endorsed his call for national referenda on the new Union Treaty, which will be held this winter, and on private property in agriculture. However, Soyuz leader and military spokesman Col. Viktor Alksnis, in preparation for the bitter power struggle that is guaranteed should Gorbachov fail, stressed that the President's speech "failed to show a way out of the crisis."

The thin tightrope that Gorbachov is walking can be seen in statements by himself and other leaders, in the weeks leading up to the Congress:

- On Nov. 26, the Supreme Soviet issued a resolution which said that "the situation in the country is continuing to deteriorate and is approaching a critical state. The situation in the political and socio-economic spheres and on the consumer market is getting worse, while the balance of money and commodities is wrecked. The acuteness of inter-ethnic relations has become dangerous. A collapse of the structures of executive power is under way. The negative influence of the shadow economy is growing."

- On Nov. 27, Defense Minister Dmitri Yazov read on television a statement prepared by him, he said, on instructions from Gorbachov, citing "unlawful actions in several republics, which are threatening the defense capability of the country." He continued, "Actions against the Army have become more and more frequent. In some republics, the formation of their own Army subunits is commencing. . . . Voices are raised about transferring nuclear weapons to individual republics. Decisions are being adopted, that demand the redeployment of formations and units of the U.S.S.R. Armed Forces, including strategic forces. Nuclear-free zones

are declared without regard for the interests of defense and security of the state. There are attacks on the honor and dignity of officers and soldiers, and members of their families. Military facilities are subjected to armed attacks.”

● On Nov. 28, Gorbachov said in a speech to cultural leaders: “We will not be divided, comrades! Like it or not. . . . If we begin to divide, there will be a war. There will be a terrible war, there will be clashes. Therefore everyone must clearly take the position: We cannot be divided. And we cannot divide the Army, and nuclear weapons, and in general—this could turn into a catastrophe not only for the country—for the whole world.”

## Structural changes

The part of the agenda of the Congress where Gorbachov will have the greatest success, is in the ratification of his proposed structural changes. This will create a new state executive power structure of institutions, all listed in his keynote speech, a presidential cabinet, a presidential national security council, and a “Defense Council.” These changes mark the shift of the locus of state power into the hands of the aforementioned coalition of military, KGB, and Russian national interests.

The other “victory” Gorbachov is expected to win, is receiving the support of up to nine republics for the new Union Treaty. This is support “in principle” for a new Union Treaty, and not support for a specific treaty document, however, as was made clear in speeches Dec. 18 and 19 from pro-treaty republic presidents, such as Boris Yeltsin of Russia, I. Karimov of Uzbekistan, and Nursultan Nazarbayev of Kazakhstan. In reality, no treaty will be signed for months to come. It will take at least that long, even under the most optimal circumstances, to thrash out an agreement dividing up the powers between the central government and the “in principle” pro-treaty republics.

However, the expected endorsement by the Congress of a new Union Treaty is not without importance. This support will be used during the new emergency rule period, to provide the juridical cover for confrontations with the republics that want independence.

## Latvia and Moldova are targeted

There are six republics that are totally against a new Union Treaty, and do not want to remain in the Soviet Union at all. They are the three Baltic republics, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania; Armenia and Georgia in the Transcaucasus; and Moldavia, now called Moldova, bordering on Romania. As the Congress convened, Moscow has provoked confrontations against Latvia and against Moldavia, for numerous reasons—such as maintaining a militarized crisis zone adjacent to the simmering Balkans.

Signs mounted in the week preceding the Congress that Moscow intends to target Latvia as its first victim. Latvia, where the native Latvians comprise only 45% of the popula-

tion, is politically the weakest link in the Baltic chain, and is of geographically strategic importance in the region.

The Dec. 2 promotion of the KGB’s Latvian expert, Boris Pugo, former head of the KGB in Latvia and the KGB’s top expert on Latvia, as new U.S.S.R. interior minister, was the first sign. Then, a week before the Congress began, Adm. Vitali P. Ivanov, commander of the Baltic Fleet, declared that units in the Baltic will use force to suppress “nationalists.” Within days, the first set-up provocation violence began in the Latvian capital of Riga. On Dec. 13 and 14, bombs exploded in Riga, first in front of the Communist Party headquarters, and then in front of the KGB headquarters.

On Dec. 18, Radio Moscow reported the following: “A new group in Latvia, called the Citizens Congress, has provoked a new conflict, with leaflets calling for Soviet soldiers to desert. The Baltic Military District has protested to the President of Latvia, Anatoli Gorbunov, and Adm. Vitali Ivanov, commander of the Baltic Fleet, has demanded that action be taken by the Latvian government against the organizers of this provocation.”

That same day, three more “mysterious” bombs went off in Riga, in front of the Communist Party Central Committee building, in front of the offices of the military prosecutor of the Baltic Military District, and near the Council of Ministers building.

Any trouble in Latvia will be the most dangerous to date because, unlike almost all previous cases of ethnic violence, this time the violence will involve Russians.

Latvia is prepared for the worst. Speaking Dec. 16, Latvian President Anatoli Gorbunov warned that Moscow was preparing to dump the republic’s sovereign, elected government and Parliament and, impose direct presidential rule. His warning was echoed by a statement of his party, the Latvian Popular Front, which said that in such a case, the population must be prepared to engage in mass demonstrations, civil disobedience, strikes, and no collaboration of any sort with the occupying power. The Popular Front added: “If necessary, we will continue our work in the underground.”

As for Moldova, Western television viewers saw the walkout from the Congress staged by the deputies from that republic. The “reason” given in Western media, was that these deputies were against the new Union Treaty. While they are against the treaty, that was not the reason for the walkout. Even the deputies from the Baltic republics are sitting in the Congress, though as non-participants.

The real reason was that Moscow had granted “observer status” to Moldova’s ethnic Russian deputies from the republic’s Dniestr region. These deputies had led that region’s Oct. 28 secession from Moldova, when an “independent Dniestr Republic” was proclaimed, and immediately petitioned to join the Russian Republic. Granting these deputies “observer status” as representatives of a “Dniestr Republic” created a precedent for similar separatist moves by Russian nationals in Estonia and Latvia, in Ukraine, or in Georgia.