

have to choose: democracy, or the Parliament. I see this as America preparing President Kuchma to dissolve Parliament, understanding that this Parliament is not going to make life easier for Kuchma, or the implementation of his economic policy more painless.

The Parliament, however it might be composed, will demand budget spending for the spring planting, and to pay wages and pensions, which means an increase on the expenditure side of the budget. It will demand changes in tax policy, in favor of the producer, which does not correspond to the IMF's orders, and so forth.

Therefore, the threat of Parliament's being dissolved does exist. The international community should not allow it. Dictatorial regimes should be warned at the moment they are being formed, not after they carry out mass executions. Therefore, all progressive forces of humanity should present Kuchma with an ultimatum now, to change his policy, and not dissolve the Parliament.

The situation in the country is very difficult. If the Parliament is able to get to work, and I think it will—Ukraine is, after all, a member of the Council of Europe—it will be necessary to concentrate all efforts and attention on the Presidential elections. We understand that there is no possibility of abolishing the office of the Presidency, given the current line-up of forces in the Parliament. Therefore, the future of Ukraine depends on who is President. If it is Kuchma again, that will be a catastrophe. Ukraine will not survive his second reign. There is no reserve strength in the economy. It just won't survive. That's all there is to it.

EIR: Thank you very much for your interview. We wish you success in your work in Parliament.

Vitrenko: Thank you.

Tasks facing the new Armenian President

by Karl-Michael Vitt

Robert Kocharian, the winner of Armenia's Presidential elections, was inaugurated on April 9. Our sources report that the mood in the Armenian population is one of great expectation. The atmosphere is comparable only to the pivotal period of 1990, when the Soviet Union was dissolving, and Armenia celebrated its independence.

Instead of experiencing improvement of its situation, Armenia plunged into a deep economic depression. The deindustrialization of the country has meant growing poverty

for the majority of the population. In addition, the country is burdened with an \$800 million foreign debt.

International Monetary Fund conditionalities have helped to spread corruption throughout all institutions in the country. The Parliament, the courts, the public prosecutors, the structures that monitor the government, and the municipal governments have become thoroughly corrupted, in the course of the last years under Kocharian's predecessor, Levon Ter-Petrosian.

During the electoral campaign, Kocharian, who was Prime Minister under Ter-Petrosian, clearly distanced himself from the ruling structures and adopted positions that won him support from opposition parties. The struggle against the criminal economy and the reconstruction of industrial capacities, which would provide people with jobs and some hope for the future, became his chief electoral campaign themes. He also declared that anyone who had led the country into calamity, should be brought to justice.

Kocharian, who has the reputation of a pragmatist, will be measured by his first steps. Hrant Khachatrian, who ran for President himself in the first round and supported Kocharian in the run-off, demanded that Kocharian form a consultative political council, on which the various Armenian political forces would be represented. Insofar as the people lack representation through the corrupt Parliament, this advisory council could stand at the President's side as he takes up the most urgent task, the formation of a new government. In response, Kocharian announced that he would broaden the National Security Council; leading political forces in the country would be coopted onto this body in the future.

Now, Armenians await the first steps of their young President.

Renewed fighting is unlikely

Those who suppose, as the international press constantly wrote on the eve of the elections, that because Kocharian was the leader of the Karabakh enclave—Armenian-inhabited territory that is formally inside Azerbaijan—his election means that the conflict with Azerbaijan will flare up again, might like to play with fire, but they are actually out of touch with reality. Azerbaijan, too, faces Presidential elections this year. In Armenia, the expectation is that scarcely anybody in Azerbaijan will try to launch new fighting with Armenia. There would be little public enthusiasm for it among the Azerbaijani population.

If the new Armenian President succeeds in stabilizing the situation and restoring sovereignty over economic and financial policy, his election will have brought needed stability to the whole Caucasus region. For it to be long-term, will require the creation of a New Bretton Woods system according to Lyndon LaRouche's concept, in which the Caucasus region would be the crossroads of great development corridors from the north, south, east, and west, in the framework of the Eurasian Land-Bridge.