



CANADIAN EDITORIALS SUPPORT UKRAINE ON SECURITY GUARANTEES

HELP THE EVIL EMPIRE

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For Russians, it is bad news as Boris Yeltsin abandons economic reform. For the West, look at ex-Soviet republics.

Russian economic reform is dying. Wounded by incompetence, vested interests and finally by public anger, it has now been abandoned by its supposed champion, Boris Yeltsin. After killing the Soviet-era parliament last fall for blocking reform, Yeltsin has now surrendered to conservatives on critical appointments to his new government. Reformists Boris Fyodorov and Yegor Gaidar appear to be out. But Central Bank Chairman Victor Gerashchenko, who has been undermining reform by printing money to maintain state subsidies, will apparently stay on.

These depressing developments are bad news for Russians, who will have to wait longer for the payback on recent sacrifices, and bad news for Western capitalist countries, who are losing their historic opportunity to guide Russia down a more liberal path. Until now, Western policy could be summarized as emphasizing Russia over other former Soviet republics and Eastern European countries, and economic progress over political considerations.

In effect, we sacrificed opinion in Poland, Lithuania and Ukraine to keep in the Kremlin's good books, and then lost the battle for Russia's heart with an economic strategy that assumed Russians wouldn't mind being impoverished for a few years.

Both approaches should now be changed. For Russia itself, Western governments must reaffirm their commitment to aid despite the slackening of reform, but stop worrying so much about the possibility the money is being wasted.

Even with the best economic strategy in Moscow, no amount of Western generosity could ever be much more than a drop in the bucket. Its real value has

always been to keep the promise of capitalism and Western friendship alive. It is essential for any political comeback by Russia's reformers.

But this generosity must now be matched by greater emphasis in former Soviet republics and vassals in Eastern Europe. Recent events in Moscow - and above all the rise of sabre-rattling expansionist Vladimir Zhirinovskiy - have proved that the West now has little to lose, and much to gain by helping Russia's neighbours reinforce their economic and political independence.

UKRAINE: A FRAGILE AND ENDANGERED INDEPENDENCE

*by David R. Marples (Reprinted from the
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President Bill Clinton's much-publicized visit to Moscow, Kyiv and Minsk in mid-January might be perceived as a success for the U.S. "partnership for peace" program. For Ukraine, it represents a severe setback for the newly independent state that is currently under assault from several quarters.

Ukrainian-Russian relations have been fragile since Ukraine declared independence in August 1991. The Russian parliament has asserted several times that Russia's "gift" of Crimea to Ukraine in 1954 was illegal and has declared the Crimean military port of Sevastopol to be Russian territory. Prominent Russians have also ardently supported separatist leaders in the Crimea who agitate for independence or a return to Russia. As Russians make up 68 percent of the Crimean population, and are about to elect a separatist-minded president there, Ukraine leaders await new eruptions in the former vacation land of Soviet leaders.

The disputed Black Sea fleet is also quartered in the Crimea. Last June,

Ukraine and Russia agreed to share the fleet. But when president Boris Yeltsin and Leonid Kravchuk met in Massandra in September, the Ukrainian leader agreed to give up Ukraine's half of the warships to Russia.

A similar agreement was reached Jan. 4 on Ukraine's nuclear missiles, at the Moscow summit meeting of Mr. Clinton, Mr. Yeltsin and Mr. Kravchuk. Ukraine agreed to turn over the weapons to Russia in exchange mainly for nuclear fuel - extracted from nuclear warheads and refined - for its power plants.

In the case of both the fleet and the missiles, Ukraine has gained little security and few economic benefits.

The Ukrainian parliament held extensive discussions about signing the U.S.-SOVIET START 1 arms-reduction agreement, against a background of world pressure. Ukraine was treated as an international pariah for not agreeing to give up instantly its nuclear weapons - 176 long-range missiles 1,800 warheads - as neighbouring communist controlled Belarus has done.

On Nov. 18, however, the parliament voted 254 to 9 (out of 440 members) to ratify the START 1 Treaty, and its earlier Libson Protocol (signed with Russia and the United States) but under carefully elaborated conditions:

Article 5 of the Protocol, which committed Ukraine to join the international Nuclear-Nonproliferation Treaty as a non-nuclear state, would not apply. Ukraine must be compensated for the warheads withdrawn from Ukraine to Russia in 1992.

Ukraine must receive significant foreign financial assistance for

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