

Opposition to Yeltsin's reforms rises

Members of Russian parliament threaten to revoke president's special powers

MOSCOW (AP) — Russian lawmakers appeared to be on the verge of revoking President Boris Yeltsin's extraordinary powers on Wednesday as momentum swung back to his opponents during a crucial parliamentary session.

Yeltsin still has time to lobby or compromise before a possible vote today to declare "dissatisfaction" with his market reforms and cancel his authority to issue economic decrees without legislative approval.

The loss of his special powers, granted by parliament a year ago, would be a severe blow to the reforms and could lead to an overhaul of Yeltsin's cabinet.

"If the president loses his extraordinary powers and his ability to lead the government, the entire cabinet of course will resign," Vice Premier Yegor Gaidar, the architect of the re-

forms, told a meeting of Yeltsin supporters Wednesday night.

"I'm afraid the odds are pretty good that the president will lose his additional powers," said Gleb Yakunin, a lawmaker and Russian Orthodox priest.

"You can see that a large part of these deputies are still pro-Communist at heart," Yakunin said.

Yeltsin had seized the initiative in the 1,046-member Congress of People's Deputies, dominated by former Communists, with a speech Tuesday warning that a reduction in his powers could "plunge the country into chaos."

He bolstered his support among Russian hard-liners by countering Ukraine's claim to the Black Sea fleet and by speeding up the formation of a separate Russian army.

In a corridor just outside the meeting hall, Yeltsin supporters hung a hand-drawn picture of a grenade with a pin in the shape of the president's face.

If it were withdrawn, the grenade — labeled "totalitarianism" and "anarchy" — would ex-

plode. But Yeltsin's opponents took the offensive on Wednesday, forcing him to return to his lonely seat in front of the parliament and listen in silence as they accused him of reducing the Russian people to poverty.

"Reformers who began the so-called shock therapy must now learn two new (phrases): first aid and resuscitation, because that is what most of the population needs," said lawmaker Valery Vorontsov.

Yeltsin's economic program has caused prices to soar and "pushed millions of people into poverty," Vorontsov said.

At the start of the session in the Grand Kremlin Palace, Yeltsin left his chair, directly under a huge Russian flag that covers a Communist-era portrait of Lenin.

Aides said he was attending an important meeting of Russia's constitutional commission in another wing of the former czar's palace.

But lawmakers voted 606 to 149 to ask him to come back to hear their criticism.



Yeltsin

Labor party may edge out Conservatives

Polls indicate Parliament leans toward minority government

LONDON (AP) — Prime Minister John Major and Labor Party leader Neil Kinnock both predicted victory on the eve of Britain's national elections.

Today, voters may prove both men wrong.

At the end of a frenetic three-week campaign that scarcely altered the opinion polls, Britain appeared headed for a minority government that would end 13 years of unshakable Conservative Party rule.

Recent polls put Labor support at 40 percent, a 2- to 3-point edge over the Conservatives. Only the Liberal Democrats, up 4 points to 20 percent, have gained significantly.

If neither of the big parties wins a majority in the House of Commons, Liberal Democrat leader Paddy Ashdown's party for support is a commitment to change the rules.

Ashdown wants to abandon the British system of winner-takes-all in all 651 districts and adopt a voting system that allocates seats based on each party's share of the national vote.

If the voting is as close as the polls indicate, the outcome may not be known until Friday afternoon, when the last three districts are expected to report.

Major, facing a loss of his huge majority he inherited months ago from Margaret Thatcher, insisted he was "absolutely stone-cold certain" of winning a majority on Thursday.

"If it were not for the difficulties and bruises that have been caused by recession, don't think there would be any doubt there would be an increased majority for the Conservatives," said Major.



Major

Officials charge accountant with security fraud

WASHINGTON (AP) — A former accountant at a Houston chemical company, using inside information about a planned merger gleaned from his superiors' travel expenses, allegedly made more than \$670,000 in illegal trading profits, officials charged Wednesday.

Edward Ruggiero, former internal audit supervisor at Vista Chemical Co. — without admitting or denying wrongdoing — agreed to give up \$678,343 in alleged illegal trading profits plus interest to settle civil charges originally brought last year by the Securities and Exchange Commis-

Ex-auditor agrees to pay over \$600,000 to Securities and Exchange Commission

sion.

A friend of his, Christopher S. Parker, also of Houston, agreed to pay \$198,156 to settle similar charges brought by the SEC, which bars individuals privy to confidential corporate information from trading on it before it becomes public.

Meanwhile, a federal grand jury in Houston returned a 39-count fraud indictment against both men stemming from their al-

leged illegal trading activities.

The SEC alleged Ruggiero, a certified public accountant, and Parker made about \$873,000 in illegal trading profits by buying Vista securities while possessing confidential information about a German energy company's planned acquisition of the Houston company.

Vista was acquired by a subsidiary of Essen, Germany-based RWE AG.

According to the SEC, Ruggiero allegedly used his position at Vista to obtain the confidential information by talking with Vista executives and gleaned information from their travel and expense reports about where they were going and with whom they were meeting.

In the criminal indictment, Houston U.S. Attorney Ron Woods said the pair was charged with varying counts of securities fraud and wire fraud. If convicted, Parker faces a maximum penalty of 105 years in prison and fines of \$5.2 million.

Bush refuses to curtail political use of Air Force One

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Bush administration is scouring its operations to stop unjustified "perks," but draws the line at any suggestion the president curtail political use of Air Force One, Budget Director Richard Darman said Wednesday.

"The public is rightly disturbed about some patterns it sees in Congress and the executive branch," Darman said at a hearing of the Senate Appropriations subcommittee that oversees White House spending.

But he said Americans draw a distinc-

tion between Bush, who has a right to "the dignity of the office," and lesser officials "who are trying to act like presidents."

The subcommittee chairman, Sen. Dennis DeConcini, D-Ariz., disputed a White House practice of requiring reimbursement of the equivalent of first-class air fare for political travel. The president's specially modified Boeing 747 costs \$25,000 an hour to operate, he said.

"To me, there's something wrong," said DeConcini. "If the president uses this and mixes politics with official business,

the politics has to pay the real cost."

Darman defended the policy, however. He said Bush, even when traveling for political purposes, cannot escape his duties as commander in chief and needs a coterie of personnel and equipment. He does not have the option of using commercial flights, Darman noted.

Charging the Bush re-election campaign, or other candidates on whose behalf the president travels, the full cost of Air Force One would be prohibitive and put the incumbent at a disadvantage to his Democratic opponents, Darman con-

tended.

Then, in a dig at one Democratic contender, he asked, "Does Jerry Brown have a regular job?"

Wednesday's hearing came in the midst of a Washington frenzy over the privileges of office.

The General Accounting Office issued an audit that found two top administration officials — Secretary of State James A. Baker III and former White House Chief of Staff John Sununu — rolled up \$774,000 in personal and political travel on military planes in two years,

but reimbursed taxpayers for less than 10 percent of that cost.

—A House subcommittee prepared for a hearing Thursday on perks. The chairman, Rep. Paul Kanjorski, D-Pa., said, "The White House does not cooperate; these are not going to be very pleasant hearings."

He said all officials should be made aware of the costs of government that they undertake, suggesting they might be more conservative about trips if they knew the expense.

Jury finds 2 policemen not guilty

Verdict angers widow of shooting victim

SAN ANTONIO (AP) — A federal jury has found two policemen and the city did not violate constitutional rights of a man shot to death after a high-speed pressway chase.

A three-man, four-woman jury ruled Tuesday that Patrolman David Alonzo and Daniel Georgiou did not use excessive force Oct. 4, 1987, when they fired shots that killed Michael L. Kaulfus.

The shooting occurred at the end of a 10-mile chase involving a stolen pickup. Alonzo testified he opened fire when Kaulfus was unarmed, made an aggressive move with his hidden handgun.

Georgiou joined in the shooting shortly thereafter. The officers previously were cleared by internal police review and a county grand jury investigation.

Their relatives hugged the patrolmen after the jury's verdict was read, while Kaulfus' widow appeared near tears.

"You know how I feel," said Tina Kaulfus. "I think it's wrong."

The 28-year-old widow said the fact the two officers fired times at her husband proved they used excessive force. Kaulfus' family was seeking \$2.5 million in damages from the city and the two officers.

Jurors deliberated nearly seven hours before reaching a decision in the three-week-old trial.

Joe Mitchell, a Houston attorney representing plaintiffs, said he was disappointed and that a decision had been made whether to appeal the verdict.

The defendants said they were relieved.

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