

The Battalion

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"Serving Texas A&M Since 1893"

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Russian prime minister fights for job, policies

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

MOSCOW — Acting Prime Minister Yegor Gaidar told a jeering Congress on Wednesday that the Russian people are smarter and more patient than the hard-liners who are trying to dump his government and block reforms.

Gaidar, fighting for his job and the economic policy he has championed for President Boris Yeltsin, conceded that the government's program had failed to tame inflation, now 25 percent a month.

But he said a declining number of strikes and public protests indicated growing public acceptance of the switch from seven decades of communism toward a free-mar-

ket economy.

"There is no threat of hunger and cold. We have passed through the period of adaptation to reforms without social upheaval," Gaidar said.

"Despite all the hardships resulting from the changes, despite all the obstacles that still must be overcome, the Russian people turn out to be smarter than politicians think."

"The people clearly understand the need for reform and are ready to work, rather than rock the boat of our well-being and future," he said.

The opposition was not swayed.

"Gaidar is a con man," said Mikhail Astafiyev, a leader of the

hard-line Russian Unity faction in Congress.

"He will almost certainly have to resign," said Dmitri Stepanov, another Russian Unity member.

Hard-liners want to slow Yeltsin's economic changes and drop Gaidar, the architect of the reforms.

Yeltsin has resisted lawmakers' demands that he nominate a prime minister for approval by the Congress. Because Gaidar is only "acting" prime minister, Yeltsin has not had to submit his nomination.

But Vladimir Shumeiko, first deputy prime minister, said Yeltsin had decided to nominate Gaidar, even though he may not have the votes to push the ap-

pointment through.

Gaidar's speech was met by jeers and stony faces from the rows of burly, middle-aged former Communists — holdovers from the old regime who were elected in March 1990, 17 months before the coup attempt that led to the collapse of the Soviet Union.

Deputies interrupted his message of optimism with derisive laughter, but Gaidar quickly resumed his rapid-fire defense.

His arms were stiffly spread as he gripped the sides of the wide lectern of the Grand Kremlin Palace, which still bore the hammer-and-sickle seal of the Soviet Union.

Yeltsin sat behind and above him on the podium, calmly over-

looking the 1,041-member Congress of People's Deputies, Russia's highest parliamentary body.

Hard-liners want to force changes in the Cabinet and slow the market reforms, which have brought soaring prices and plunging living standards.

But neither Yeltsin nor the hard-liners have a clear majority. Both sides are maneuvering for support from about 300 undecided and unpredictable deputies, known in Russian as "the Swamp."

Outside the Kremlin's crenelated red brick walls, about 200 Cossacks in traditional long cloaks adorned with polished silver bullets demonstrated in support of Yeltsin, and bearded Russian

Muslims danced and chanted for the president.

A dozen yards away, by the onion domes of St. Basil's Cathedral, about 200 pro-Communist supporters waved red flags.

Police barricades separated the opposing sides.

Gaidar, a 36-year-old former economics researcher, only occasionally glanced down at his notes during the 55-minute speech.

He said that in addition to hardships, his reforms had yielded some positive results, noting the increased production of televisions, videocassette recorders and other consumer goods.

In the most fiery moment of his speech, he shot back at Congress speaker Ruslan Khasbulatov.

Legislature abandons school bill

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

AUSTIN — The Texas Legislature adjourned Thursday without producing a school finance plan in a special session marked by partisan wrangling.

"It's a disappointment for the schools and the schoolchildren of this state," said Democratic Gov. Ann Richards. "We have seen very cynical partisan politics played."

Rep. Tom Craddick of Midland, head of the House GOP caucus, said the session was "more political on the other side."

"From a political aspect, she (Richards) is the one that's played the school issue like a yo-yo. And I think there's been a real void in her leadership," Craddick said.

Richards defended her role.

"I think I did everything I could do," she said.



Mary Folse, a sophomore elementary education major from Bellaire, Texas practices her archery in her archery class in the Read Building on Thursday. Folse enjoys her class.

DARRIN HILL/The Battalion

A&M actively recruits ethnic minorities

By GARY P. CARROLL

City Editor of THE BATTALION

Although Texas A&M University has fallen under heavy scrutiny for recent allegations of racist activity, there is no denying that the University continues to take an active role in minority recruitment, according to statistics prepared by University officials.

With a 1992 student enrollment of 42,988, representing students from all 50 states and 116 countries, A&M has been active in recruiting minorities.

A Texas A&M Office of Planning and Institutional Analysis report shows an 89 percent increase in the total enrollment of minority students at A&M since 1985. Since '85, enrollment of black and Hispanic students has increased from 2,448 to 4,634.

Corey Anthony, vice chair for the Memorial Student Center Black Awareness Committee lauds the efforts of the University, but he would like to see more.

"We haven't reached our goal," Anthony said. "(The University) is making an effort to increase (minority) recruitment, but I don't think that we've gotten where we need to be yet."

Anthony said he would like to see the University take a more active role recruiting minority students by going out to the high schools.

A&M ranks in the top 20 in the number of National Achievement Scholars, competitive scholarships for African-Americans and has the highest minority retention rate in the Southwest Conference.

According to the 1990 Higher Education Coordinating Board report (the last year the board released figures) A&M retains more than 80 percent of its minority students.

Up until spring 1992, 63.6 percent of all black students at A&M, and 56.1 percent of Hispanic students who entered A&M by fall 1986, had graduated — compared

to 66.3 percent for Anglos.

These figures regarding minority performance at A&M can be attributed in part to University efforts aimed at attracting minorities to A&M.

The Office of Admissions Counseling actively recruits minorities from Texas high schools and junior colleges. Also, University President William Mobley visits predominantly minority high schools to stress to students the importance of education.

Anamaria Salinas, a freshman from Dallas, said she was impressed with the University's minority recruitment program. A recruiter visited her high school and made her feel that she would not be alone at A&M, she said.

The recruiter, who was also a minority, emphasized that A&M has support groups and the organizations to help minorities adjust, Salinas said.

Salinas said she was scared about attending A&M at first because her high school had a large number of minorities.

"When I came to A&M, I knew that there were minority organizations, but once I got involved I was a lot better," she said. "When I wasn't involved, I felt alone."

"If you seek it, it's there for you."

Since Mobley became president in 1988, the enrollment in the President's Achievement Award Scholarship Program — a program that provides yearly \$2,500 stipends to academically successful black and Hispanic students for four years — has increased from 1,010 to 1,275.

A&M has been awarded numerous honors including Dow Chemical's Valuing Diversity Award, The Retention Excellence Award, Certificate of Appreciation from the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board for consistently increasing minority and enrollment and retention from 1983-1989.

The end came when House Republicans, with few exceptions, remained united against a proposed constitutional amendment backed by Democratic leaders.

The House voted 90-57 for the proposal, 10 short of the 100 votes required for passage in the 150-member chamber.

A two-thirds vote of the Legislature is needed for a proposed amendment to be put before Texas voters for ratification.

Fifty-three House Republicans voted against the leadership-backed proposal, out of 58.

Three were absent, and two voted for it. Four Democrats also opposed the amendment.

The amendment would have allowed some local property tax money to be shifted statewide from wealthier to poorer school districts.

The Texas Supreme Court in January ruled unconstitutional the current system of shifting funds among school districts, within counties or groups of counties.

The court has given lawmakers until June 1, 1993, to come up with a constitutional system to equalize funding between property-rich and poor school districts.

Public schools are funded mainly by local property taxes and state aid.

NASA faces decreased funds

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

CAPE CANAVERAL, Fla. — NASA's successful launch of Discovery on Wednesday capped a stellar year of eight shuttle launchings, the most since the Challenger explosion.

But while NASA finally seems to have its act together, funding is down, costs are up, the military is out and a White House task force is urging speedy replacement of the fleet.

"The evidence has been building for years and years and years. There's just nothing for them (shuttle astronauts) to do up there, at least nothing that's worth the risk and the cost of putting them up there," said former NASA historian Alex Roland, now a history professor at Duke University. But for NASA, hope springs eternal.

"Pretty soon somebody's going to notice that (improving record) and say, 'Shoot, it looks like those folks know what they're doing, maybe this is a good deal we've got going here and maybe it can serve the country for some time in the future,'" deputy shuttle director Brewster Shaw, an ex-astronaut, said Wednesday.

Two weeks ago, the White House task force recommended a new launch system — manned and unmanned — that would be cheaper, safer and more reliable than the shuttle, which is based on 1970s technology. To pay for this new family of rockets, the panel recommended reducing shuttle flights as soon as possible. NASA estimates each shuttle mission costs about \$500 million, assuming a rate of eight flights a year, the goal for the foreseeable future. Some analysts, however, say the cost is closer to \$1 billion.

U.S. to command foreign relief effort

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

UNITED NATIONS — U.S. military commanders will have to give up the free rein they had in the Persian Gulf War and accept some U.N. oversight of troops in Somalia, diplomats said Wednesday.

But a U.S. draft resolution for the Security Council leaves the door open for a U.S. general to command a proposed American force in the famine-wracked nation. Diplomats also said daily operations will probably be left to field commanders.

"The United States is likely to be commanding the operation," said David Hannay, Britain's ambassador, told reporters on Tuesday. Pentagon sources have said 22,000 to 20,000 U.S. troops might be sent to Somalia to get food to

more than 1 million Somalis threatened by starvation. The Bush administration had offered up to 30,000 troops.

An international relief operation has been hamstrung by feuding Somali warlords and bandits in the lawless East African nation. The State Department says 1,000 people in Somalia are dying every day of starvation and disease.

The death toll already exceeds 300,000.

The draft resolution is part of a compromise Washington is forging to win the support of China, which has threatened to veto a free-wheeling U.S.-led operation.

African nations are also worried about U.S. domination of their continent.

The compromise was one of the issues to be discussed in a closed-door Security Council meeting Wednesday.

But Brown said the bus trip Jan. 17 — not

Clinton makes inaugural plans

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

WASHINGTON — President-elect Clinton will start his inaugural celebration with a trademark bus trip and end it with a White House open house, mixing invitation-only affairs with lots of free events for ordinary Americans, organizers said Wednesday.

Clinton wants "an open inaugural, an accessible inaugural and a dignified inaugural," said Democratic National Committee Chairman Ronald H. Brown, who also chairs the Presidential Inaugural Committee.

"It very much reflects the kind of campaign that Bill Clinton and Al Gore ran."

The five days of festivities — running Jan. 17-21 — will cost less than \$20 million, paid for by private contributions and sales of tickets and souvenirs, Brown said.

There will be at least eight free events, including a concert and fireworks at the Lincoln Memorial, an outdoor festival nearby on the Capital mall, as well as several events aimed at young people.

Clinton will cap Inauguration Day, Jan. 20, with 10 invitation-only, black-tie balls for about 65,000 people. Tickets will sell for \$125.

But Brown said the bus trip Jan. 17 — not

the balls — will set the tone.

The ride will begin at Thomas Jefferson's Virginia home, Monticello, and be a mini-version of Clinton's campaign bus tours, complete with stops along the way and a well-publicized route so crowds can gather by the roadside.

The decision to begin the festivities outside the capital was designed to show the inaugural is not just a Washington insiders' affair, committee members said.

"It is not just meant to signify what touched the American people during the course of the campaign but to really touch American history and the fact that it is more than just what happens in Washington but how we bring our nation and our people together," said Brown.

When Clinton arrives in Washington, he will go to the Lincoln Memorial for a public concert and fireworks.

Like Clinton, both Jefferson and Abraham Lincoln were presidents "at a time when government and the people were estranged," noted Rahm Emanuel, the committee's co-director.

Clinton's middle name also happens to be Jefferson, and 1993 marks the 250th anniversary of Jefferson's birth.

The day after his swearing in, Clinton and his wife, Hillary, will wind up the inaugural festivities by welcoming the public to the White House.

"We hope that as many people as can fit show up," said spokesman George Stephanopoulos, from transition headquarters in Little Rock, Ark.

The theme of the inauguration, "American Reunion — New Beginnings, Renewed Hope," is designed to echo Clinton campaign themes of coming together and healing divisions.

The campaign will also be remembered Jan. 18 when the Clintons host an "American Citizen's Lunch" for some of the people whose lives and stories touched them during their campaign travels, Brown said.

Clinton's undergraduate alma mater, Georgetown University, will be the site of a reception for the diplomatic community that same day.

Organizers did not announce the names of performers at any of the events, but Emanuel said producer Quincy Jones would put together the concert at the Lincoln Memorial.

Singers Judy Collins and Barbra Streisand have been mentioned as possible performers at inaugural galas.