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Yeltsin faces political war after rubles become void

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

MOSCOW — President Boris Yeltsin scrambled Monday to ease the Central Bank's voiding of billions of old rubles, which had angered Russians and intensified the power struggle with the hard-line legislature.

Yeltsin ordered banks to give citizens an extra three weeks to trade in their old rubles for new banknotes and substantially increased the amount of new rubles they could obtain immediately in cash.

The uproar came as Yeltsin faced a new battle with hard-line lawmakers, who waged a bruising offensive last week against the president's economic and political reforms while he vacationed outside Moscow.

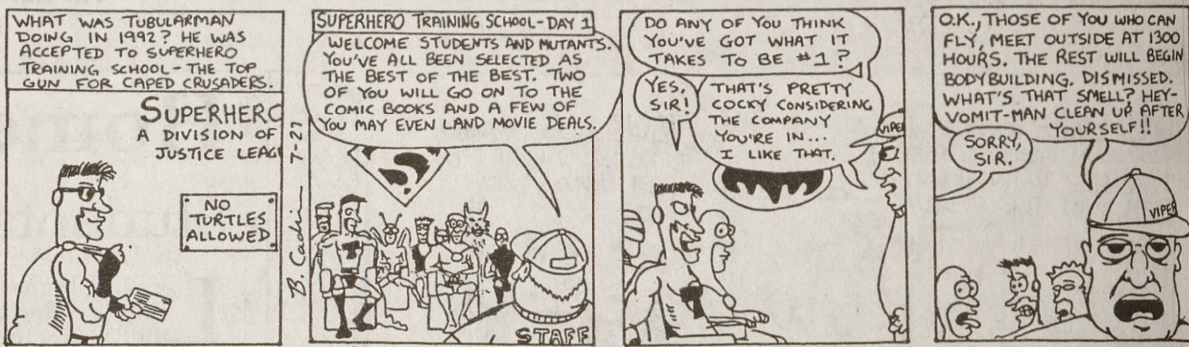
The developments could undermine the image of stability and control that Yeltsin successfully conveyed to leaders of the world's richest nations at the Tokyo summit of the Group of Seven countries less than three weeks ago.

The Central Bank's decree Saturday gave people two weeks to change old bills for new ones, with amounts over 35,000 rubles (\$35) to be credited as six-month savings deposits at an interest rate well below inflation. Rubles printed before 1993 were declared invalid for purchases as of Monday.

The bank said the move was intended to sop up cash in the economy to cool inflation that is running at 20 percent a month.

Tubes-THE LOST YEAR

By Boomer Cardinale



ANGUS THE SERIES

By Paul Stroud



AGGIE MAN

By Sergio Rosas



U.N. commanders give OK to retaliate

Serb attack on peacekeepers increases intensity during humanitarian mission

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

SARAJEVO, Bosnia-Herzegovina — U.N. commanders Monday brought peacekeepers closer to battle in Bosnia's war, warning Serbs who attacked a U.N. base that they face immediate retaliation if they do it again.

"I cannot allow the lives of my soldiers to be put in danger," said the U.N. commander for Bosnia, Lt. Gen. Francis Briquemont of Belgium. "I am angry at this betrayal," Briquemont said. "I have told my commanders they must reply immediately, within the next few seconds," if attacked again.

French Gen. Jean Cot, commander for all U.N. forces in the former Yugoslavia, said peacekeepers would have fired back Sunday had they been equipped to retaliate.

The two generals bitterly dismissed a Serb claim that Sunday's attack on French U.N. peacekeepers in Sarajevo was the work of provocateurs in the Muslim-led Bosnian army.

No soldiers were hurt, but four vehicles were wrecked and six others damaged. The 9,000 peacekeepers in Bosnia have rarely used orders to use "all available means" to fulfill their mission of getting humanitarian aid to some 2 million in need.

U.N. troops in central Bosnia have fired back at snipers, and in April killed two Bosnian Croats who attacked a Muslim-led aid convoy. But U.N. forces in and around Sarajevo haven't duelled with the Serbs, making the peacekeepers a butt of derision among Sarajevans.

The Serb chief-of-staff, Gen. Manojlo Milovanovic, expressed "deep sorrow and condolences" to the United Nations over Sunday's attack.

His letter offered Serb participation in investigating the attack, even though it blamed Muslims.

The attack and other Serb assaults on Sarajevo in recent days underline the confidence of Bosnia's Serbs — who control 70 percent of Bosnia after 16 months of war — as new peace talks open Tuesday in Geneva.

It also coincided with the supposed start of an agreement among Bosnia's warring factions to halt offensives.

Bosnian President Alija Izetbegovic had insisted attacks on Sarajevo cease before going to Geneva. But with his people outmaneuvered in battle and at the negotiating table, he can't dictate terms.

Thought control

The ultimate user-friendly computer

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

YOKOSUKA, Japan — Forget keyboards and "mice." Someday, computers and other machines may be controlled directly by human thoughts.

While other researchers struggle to develop computers that can understand human speech, scientists here are trying to go a step further — computers that can read your mind.

"Computers today are very difficult to use," says Norio Fujimaki, a researcher for Fujitsu Corp. "First you have to be able to type. It would be very nice if you could just think about something, and have the computer automatically do it."

No amount of deep thinking by the scientists makes this an imminent achievement, however.

Researcher Akira Hiraiwa says the goal will probably take years because of the difficulty of deciphering the brain's weak and complex waves. He works at a laboratory here at the telecommunications giant Nippon Telegraph and Telephone Corp.

Hiraiwa and Fujimaki are studying electrical signals associated with thoughts and body motions. They hope to develop ways of using those signals to control machines — computers or otherwise.

Hiraiwa has created a computer-assisted robot hand that can mimic motions of a human hand by analyzing the tiny nerve pulses sent by the brain to the finger muscles.

The signals are picked up by coin-sized sensors attached to the inside of a watchband and then sent to the computer, which divides them into the messages intended for each finger and instructs the robotic fingers accordingly.

"It's difficult because the signals are so weak and are hard to detect and differentiate," Hiraiwa says.

In a recent demonstration, Hiraiwa grasped a ball in his fingers — the watchband strapped to his wrist — and the robotic hand clenched another ball, copying each finger's motion.

It initially took a supercomputer three hours to learn a person's nerve signal patterns, Hiraiwa says. Now, a much smaller computer with special processors needs only a few minutes.

Israel

Continued from Page 1

appeared at either of the normally busy harbors.

The Israelis also struck coastal bases of Syrian-backed Palestinian fighters.

Israeli Foreign Minister Shimon Peres said the raids had two aims: "One, to directly hurt those trying to attack us and the second, to get the attention of residents and governments involved so they will put pressure to stop Hezbollah."

Israel has accused Syria of allowing the guerrillas to operate in Lebanese areas patrolled by 40,000 Syrian soldiers. Lebanese police said six Syrian soldiers were killed in Israeli attacks Sunday.

Syria's Foreign Ministry said Monday that the Israeli attacks "cannot be considered as an aggression on Lebanon, Syria and the Arabs alone, but an aggression on the entire world community."

In the eastern town of Baalbek, Hezbollah's leader, Sheikh Hassan Nasrallah, said, "What is happening is not going to stop us from continuing and escalating our confrontation to drive the Israeli enemy out of Lebanon by force of arms."

A naval training base for the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine-General Command was leveled, killing 10 people and wounding 30.

Israeli gunboats and fighter-bombers also attacked the Bad-dawi refugee camp, where 12,000 Palestinians live near the northern port of Tripoli, and the Mieh Mieh shantytown on Sidon's outskirts, also occupied by Palestinians.

The Palestine Liberation Organization said from its headquarters in Tunisia that "many Palestinians were killed" and dozens wounded, including women and children.

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