

## Russian official admits lying last fall about decrease of crime

MOSCOW (AP) — Last fall, Boris Yeltsin beamed at his Interior Minister, the country's top cop, and thanked him for a sharp downturn in crime.

"One can say with confidence that people feel safer now than they did two or three years ago," the president said then.

On Tuesday, in an extraordinary admission, Yeltsin's prime minister-designate conceded there was no drop in crime. Sergei Kiriyenko accused police of telling "shameless lies" to mask their failure to stem Russia's headlong dive into lawlessness.

It was a remarkable moment in more ways than one. Mostly, it was a concession that Russia may be losing the battle against crime — something the government's opponents and foreign observers have been warning about for a long time.

It also seemed to give Kiriyenko, a 35-year-old banker and martial arts buff, a chance to act tough before a Russian public scared and angered by growing crime.

The opposition has been portraying Kiriyenko as an inexperienced lightweight who lacks the mettle to run a government.

Russian crime statistics have always been suspect, but over the past five years they have showed a sharp increase in crime, something obvious to any Russian newspaper reader or television viewer.

A wave of contract hits, kidnappings and other gangland violence has hinted at the breadth of mob influence in Russian society. And lower-level crimes — robberies, muggings, break-ins — seemed to have reached even the smallest communities.

When Interior Minister Anatoly Kulikov said last year that crime

was subsiding, few people questioned the news and Yeltsin proudly congratulated him.

Kulikov was among those sacked in Yeltsin's mass purge of his Cabinet last month, and is not expected to return.

Last week, a prosecutor told a presidential commission on human rights that the police had vastly under-reported crimes, especially serious ones, and that police officers themselves were frequently running afoul of the law. He recounted cases of torture, coercion and rape by police.

Against that backdrop, Kiriyenko held a teleconference Tuesday with top law enforcement officials.

He said police officials were trying to "whitewash statistics" to conceal how crime was rising and accused police of "shameless lies, especially in the sphere of crime solving."

## Clinton visit to Ireland questioned

BELFAST, Northern Ireland (AP) — Northern Ireland's two major Protestant parties bitterly disagree about the landmark peace accord, but they agreed on one thing Tuesday: President Clinton should not try to sell it to people here.

The government of the Irish Republic, meanwhile, freed nine Irish Republican Army prisoners in a bid to boost support for the accord among the outlawed group's supporters.

The Ulster Unionist Party, already split over its leaders' decision to accept the deal, said a possible Clinton visit the week before a May 22 referendum might be "misunderstood" by Protestants resentful of foreign pressure to compromise, making rejection more likely.

"I think it might be misunderstood if he was to directly involve himself in an electoral process here in the province," said a senior Ulster Unionist negotiator, Reg Empey, arguing that Protestants "want to make up their own minds."

Leaders of the IRA-allied Sinn Fein party spent Tuesday at a secret location considering how to sell to their hard-line supporters an accord that the party's negotiators accepted, but falls far short of a united Ireland.

The deal will be the focus of debate this weekend at Sinn Fein's annual conference in Dublin, but leaders are hoping to delay a vote over whether to accept it until later this month.

The peace agreement, arrived at after 22 years of peace talks, would create a new Northern Ireland assembly that Protestants and Catholics open — and cooperate formally with the Irish Republic.

The deal keeps Northern Ireland firmly within Britain and its troops based here for the future.

The British and Irish governments are asking for a majority "no" vote in the referendum, do worry that a large minority "no" would deal the overwhelming public endorsement feel it will require.

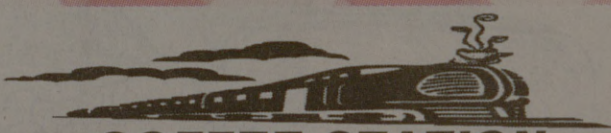
The nine IRA inmates walked free from the Republic's top-security Portlaoise prison and issued a statement pledging 100 percent support for the IRA and its allied Sinn Fein party.

All had been serving sentences for carrying arms and explosives — and all but one had agreed to remain behind bars until the 21st century.

While the north's Catholic leaders seek Clinton to encourage the plan's acceptance, Northern Ireland's Protestant leaders warn it would be viewed as foreign interference.

"What business is it of Mr. Clinton's to interfere in Ireland?" said Peter Robinson, deputy leader of the Democratic Unionist Party.

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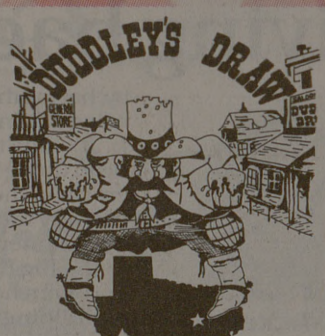
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Applications for Summer and Fall Staff, Section Editors and Managing Editors are now available in Room 013 Reed McDonald Building

There will be two informational meetings Thursday, April 16 at 7 p.m. and 8 p.m. in Room 003 Reed McDonald.

General staff applications for are due Sunday, April 22 in Room 013 Reed McDonald by 5 p.m. (April 15 for editors).

All majors welcome.  
Experience not required.  
For more information, call 845-3313.