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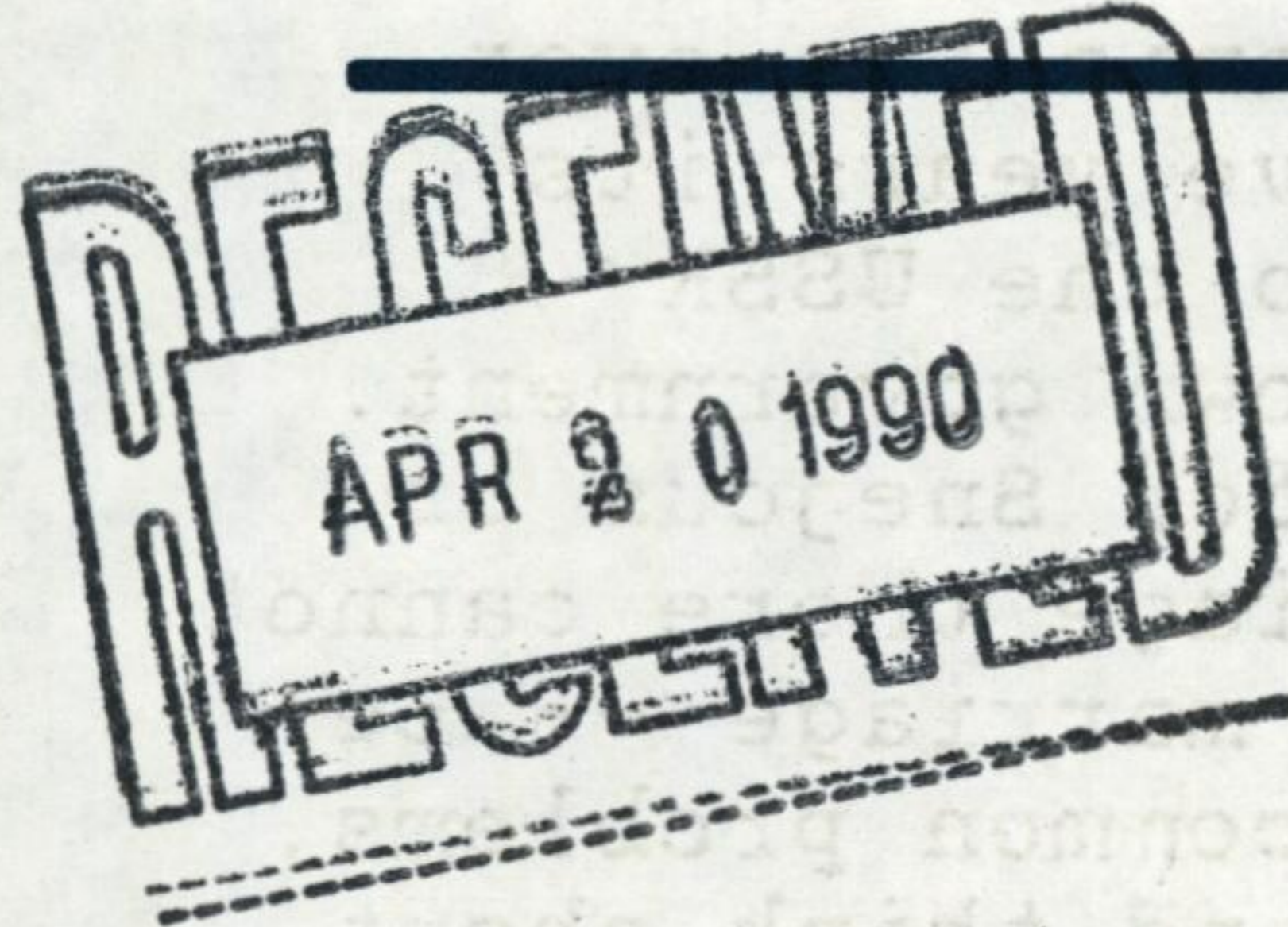


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Review of the Soviet Press

COMPILED BY A.P.N.

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LITHUANIA

The Soviet papers continue to give prominence to the situation in Lithuania which developed following the last month decision by the Lithuanian Supreme Soviet to secede from the Soviet Union and the declaration of this decision unconstitutional by the country's legislature, the Congress of People's Deputies of the USSR.

Reports from Vilnius and other Lithuanian cities indicate that the social and political situation there has further deteriorated. For all the apparent calm, tensions are not abating. "The constitutional conflict is exacerbating by the day, threatening a deadlock," Nikolai Lashkevich reports from the Lithuanian capital for IZVESTIA's weekly supplement SOYUZ. It was not until the presidential appeal to the people and Supreme Soviet of the Republic, Lashkevich writes, that "the Lithuanian Parliament heard sober voices, perhaps for the first time." Previously, for instance, the issue of a referendum, which new Soviet legislation makes an indispensable condition for the secession from the Union, had never come up for discussion, now a number of Deputies are pressing for it to be held.

Anatoly Sobchak, leading lawyer on the USSR Supreme Soviet who recently made a private trip to Lithuania, said in an interview with RABOCHAYA TRIBUNA (WORKERS' FORUM) that the law laying down the procedure for secession from the Union was prompted by the vital need for an efficient mechanism to guarantee the interests of all citizens, not only persons of an indigenous ethnic group, and the harmonization of the interests of a Republic and the Union. Such a law is now in place and must be enforced.

"I would even invoke provisions of international law", Sobchak goes on to say. "Similar situation have already occurred, Namibia being a case in point. Whenever territorial changes or a secession are at issue, a plebiscite or

referendum are used."

Sobchak considers it unjustified to harp on the illegality of the 1939-40 acts. Indeed, Lithuania has ever since been part of the Soviet Union. Every five years its citizens send their elected representatives to the USSR Supreme Soviet, and the Republic has had its own government. "No one forced the Lithuanians to vote, say, for Snejcus or Paleckis. So, such arguments as "without marriage there cannot be any divorce" do not hold water. The actual marriage -- be it good or bad -- has left many children and common problems. Lithuanian politicians would do well to stop and think about it," Sobchak says. "My own view is," he adds, "that world nations, virtually all of them, are acting wisely in refusing to hasten to establish relations with Lithuania till its secession is legally framed."

SOVIET-AMERICAN DIALOGUE

IZVESTIA and PRAVDA have carried extensive reports on the press conference held in Washington by Soviet Foreign Minister Eduard Shevardnadze following his talks with US Secretary of State James Baker and conversations with US President George Bush. The discussions showed that both sides saw sufficient ground for the next meeting between their top leaders. It was decided that the meeting would take place in the US between May 30 and June 3 this year. "In the present environment, the agreement on the time of the summit meeting serves to show that the Soviet-US dialogue is not being pursued for short-term expediency, this agreement is indicative of the continued commitment to a policy resistant to fluctuations caused by fast changes in the world," Shevardnadze said. "The situation being what it is, the Soviet-US dialogue no doubt constitutes a factor for stability and offers a fairly good chance for a coordinated and favourable influence on potentially destructive processes in various parts of the world."

In an interview with PRAVDA, President Mikhail Gorbachev said concerning the announcement of a new summit: "Soviet-US summits have proved a very important factor of world politics. Frank conversations help get a clearer idea of the stands and interests of the two nations. Efforts are under way to harmonize them with the interests of other countries and the world community -- of course, in the context of appropriate views of the world and the problems facing it."

According to columnist Manki Ponomaryov of the Soviet Army newspaper KRASNAYA ZVEZDA the outcome of the talks in

Washington is evidence that, for all the problems and difficulties in the way of a further development of productive Soviet-US relations, both the Soviet Union and, by all accounts, the US have made a choice in favour of greater cooperation.

USSR SUPREME SOVIET CHAIRMAN VISITS INDIA

Over the past few days the Soviet press has broadly covered the visit to India by Anatoli Lukyanov, Chairman of the USSR Supreme Soviet. Lukyanov gave interviews to various papers in connection with the results of his visit.

"Our present trip has once again proved a very important conclusion about the huge importance of South Asia for the development of the world," Lukyanov told PRAVDA's correspondents. "The future belongs to this region, where ... The economy of the 21st century is being formed on a renewed scientific and technological basis.... India has a growing role to play in South Asia. A country which does not orient itself to this dynamically developing region does not develop itself."

India was the first country Lukyanov visited in the capacity of the Chairman of the Soviet Parliament. "The choice of India was not accidental," he told IZVESTIA. "It is a great country with which we have friendly relations. We intend to continue developing and deepening these relations. But the most important thing is to continue the line in our relations which was initiated during Mikhail Gorbachev's visit to that country in November 1986. Our task was to check where our relations stood. We have done that and we think that our visit was a success which will contribute to deepening and furthering Soviet-Indian ties."

CHANGES IN EASTERN EUROPE AND SECURITY GUARANTEES

PRAVDA's Yevgeni Shashkov says that it will be difficult for many Soviet people to overcome apprehensions they have in connection with the withdrawal of Soviet troops from a number of Warsaw Pact countries, which began following political changes in these countries. But renunciation of imposed patronage over Eastern Europe, the correspondent contends, is victory for common sense and democracy, which will eventually be in the national interests of the Soviet Union.

"It goes without saying that the Soviet troop pullout

from Warsaw Pact countries should be coupled with the creation of security guarantees for the Soviet Union. One of such guarantees is the retention of a 'force disengagement strip' along the perimeter of the USSR's Western frontiers. The transformation of the Soviet Armed Forces on an altogether new military and technical base should proceed parallel to the dismantling of our military structure in the Warsaw Pact. The entire package of such measures will fully accord with the choice this country has made - transition to thriftier, more prudent and strictly defensive sufficiency which should guarantee our country's security," Shashkov writes.

The PRAVDA observer contends that the USSR has security guarantees even in the transition period, when the on-going changes are inevitably fraught with certain elements of instability and the possibility of all sorts of conflicts. "I see these guarantees in the potential of East-West trust which has been lately created. It is common sense, which prevails on both sides, mutual rejection of confrontation sentiments and a common interest in a gradual, democratic and peaceful transition to a new quality of international relations in Europe."

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