

# Pre-Election Briefing on Russia



November 29, 1995

Briefing of the  
Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe

---

## **ABOUT THE ORGANIZATION (OSCE)**

The Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe, also known as the Helsinki process, traces its origin to the signing of the Helsinki Final Act in Finland on August 1, 1975, by the leaders of 33 European countries, the United States and Canada. Since then, its membership has expanded to 55, reflecting the breakup of the Soviet Union, Czechoslovakia, and Yugoslavia. (The Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, Serbia and Montenegro, has been suspended since 1992, leaving the number of countries fully participating at 54.) As of January 1, 1995, the formal name of the Helsinki process was changed to the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE).

The OSCE is engaged in standard setting in fields including military security, economic and environmental cooperation, and human rights and humanitarian concerns. In addition, it undertakes a variety of preventive diplomacy initiatives designed to prevent, manage and resolve conflict within and among the participating States.

The OSCE has its main office in Vienna, Austria, where weekly meetings of permanent representatives are held. In addition, specialized seminars and meetings are convened in various locations and periodic consultations among Senior Officials, Ministers and Heads of State or Government are held.

## **ABOUT THE COMMISSION (CSCE)**

The Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE), also known as the Helsinki Commission, is a U.S. Government agency created in 1976 to monitor and encourage compliance with the agreements of the OSCE.

The Commission consists of nine members from the U.S. House of Representatives, nine members from the U.S. Senate, and one member each from the Departments of State, Defense and Commerce. The positions of Chair and Co-Chair are shared by the House and Senate and rotate every two years, when a new Congress convenes. A professional staff assists the Commissioners in their work.

To fulfill its mandate, the Commission gathers and disseminates information on Helsinki-related topics both to the U.S. Congress and the public by convening hearings, issuing reports reflecting the views of the Commission and/or its staff, and providing information about the activities of the Helsinki process and events in OSCE participating States.

At the same time, the Commission contributes its views to the general formulation of U.S. policy on the OSCE and takes part in its execution, including through Member and staff participation on U.S. Delegations to OSCE meetings as well as on certain OSCE bodies. Members of the Commission have regular contact with parliamentarians, government officials, representatives of non-governmental organizations, and private individuals from OSCE participating States.

# PRE-ELECTION BRIEFING ON RUSSIA

WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 29, 1995

COMMISSION ON SECURITY AND COOPERATION IN EUROPE  
WASHINGTON, DC

The commission met at 2:08 p.m., in room 628 of the Dirksen Senate Office Building. Dorothy Taft, chief of staff for the commission, presided.

Ms. Taft. We'll get started. Ladies and gentlemen, on behalf of Representative Christopher H. Smith and Senator Alfonse M. D'Amato, the chairman and co-chairman of the Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe, I welcome each of you here to today's briefing regarding the upcoming Duma elections in Russia. My name is Dorothy Taft, and I am the chief of staff for the commission.

The Helsinki Commission, as we are called, and as many of you know, was established in 1976 to monitor and encourage compliance with the Helsinki Accords and the subsequent documents of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe. The Duma elections next month, along with the Presidential elections scheduled for June of next year, will determine the direction that Russia will take as to European security and cooperation.

The election results may have significant bearing on the nature of our bilateral relations with Russia, and I would submit that to one degree or another, our relations with the world's second largest nuclear power will also play a role in our own Presidential elections in 1996. Recognizing these various factors, it behooves us to be acquainted with Russia's political leaders and the political landscape upon which they operate. The commission has invited four recognized specialists in Russian affairs and electoral processes to share with us their insight on the Duma elections and beyond.

Mr. Robert Dahl is an elections specialist with the International Foundation for Electoral Systems, IFES, and he was IFES's onsite manager for the December 1993 Russian parliamentary elections. He has been visiting Russia since 1993 and has been closely monitoring the election law and its implications for the elections coming up.

Dr. Leon Aron is resident scholar at the American Enterprise Institute and an adjunct professor at Georgetown University where he teaches a course on the post-Communist transition in Russia. He is a frequent guest commentator on public affairs programs such as MacNeil/Lehrer Newshour, which is now the Newshour with Jim Lehrer; CNN, C-SPAN, and NPR's All Things Considered.

Dr. Peter Stavrakis is acting director at the Kennan Institute for Advanced Russian Studies of the Woodrow Wilson Institute for Scholars and associate professor of political science at the University of Vermont. Previously a senior consultant at the Vermont-Karelia Sister State Committee, he has just returned from Krasnodar in southern Russia where he is working on a Kennan project to raise the capacity of local and regional government.

Mr. Paul Goble is a senior fellow at the Potomac Foundation. He was the special advisor for Soviet Nationality Problems and Baltic Affairs at the State Department. He was director of research at Radio Liberty and special assistant for Soviet Nationalities at the State

Department's Bureau of Intelligence and Research. He is the editor of four volumes on ethnic problems in the former Soviet Union and has written more than 100 articles on ethnic and nationality questions.

I welcome our panel here today, and I ask that each of them make about a 10-minute presentation. Upon conclusion of their remarks, I ask that the people in the audience raise questions to the whole panel or individual members of the panel. So, to begin our session, I will start with Mr. Robert Dahl.

Mr. Dahl. Should I use the microphone?

Ms. Taft. Yes, please.

Mr. Dahl. Thanks very much. As indicated, I had the pleasure of serving as IFES's onsite manager for the 1993 elections. I had also worked there before that time for the International Republican Institute in developing election law. I have to tell you, in working there the last 3 or 4 years, it has been startling to see the level of professionalism and sophistication among people involved in the election process, election administration, parliamentarians, and academics.

The Russians have always been capable of holding elections. They had elections all the way through the 70 years of Communism. The difference now is that they are competitive, and the actual mechanics of holding an election on election day have generally been satisfactory by Western standards, I think, from the beginning of democratic development in now what is Russia, but a lot of the other factors involved in the political process, particularly, of course, the pre-election campaign, are areas they are still working very hard to master and become familiar with.

IFES has had a unique role in advising the Central Election Commission itself, and here especially I have been able to see from 2 years ago when they were hastily organized for the elections that were by decree of the president in 1993. That whole episode, that whole era, was one of quickly throwing together a commission structure and trying to borrow people from the Russian bureaucracy to man this commission as the December 1993 elections involved four separate ballots, as you recall. There were elections to the Duma, as this year, and they were bifurcated, as they are this year, by party list voting, and the election by single mandate constituency districts, much like our Congress. Each of the elected deputies has the same powers once they are elected, and there is no compensation in terms of electoral process between the two. It is like two separate elections for half of the same body. But besides those, they also had the constitutional referendum of 1993, and the upper house, the Federation Council, which is not being elected this year and is still a matter of political dispute about whether they will be elected.

In the event, since that time, IFES has been working with the Central Election Commission. Their questions and the problems they pose and ask us for information about and solutions to their problems have become increasingly sophisticated. They are aware, I think, more than ever of the enormous complications they face in implementing their election. Our final month's work for these elections will really be more a matter of monitoring how well their system monitors itself more than simply monitoring it from a Western standpoint. I think there is far less for us to decide about whether the system is good or bad or fair or not fair. More important, we need to be able to decide whether this system is one that they themselves can evaluate, that it is sufficiently observable and accountable and transparent, as the term is used in election monitoring, so that in a couple areas I will discuss in a minute,

we concentrate more on the process and whether the process is one that can be judged as operating effectively and efficiently.

The voting process itself, in terms of the polling place in the 1995 elections, is really much the same as it was in 1993 except, of course, there are just two ballots and just one election for the state Duma. In my experience, this will be the first time that elections in Russia did not involve a ballot where they had to cross out that which they disfavor. Even in 1993, their constitutional referendum ballot was a “cross-out the one you don’t like,” and that one kind of anachronism is now fading away.

The law is more explicit regarding spoiled ballots. There was much variety in the way that they handled those in the past. Now it is written in the law that if a voter makes a mistake, they take the ballot back to the commission; the commission will void that ballot, note it in their record, and give them a new ballot.

The law is more explicit about not voting for others; that is, people have to vote in person. It used to be the father might come along with four passports or ID cards from his family and vote the whole family. That is more explicitly prohibited. Also, the law is more explicit that people must vote in a voting booth and because of the legacy of Communism, people were more comfortable voting in public, and now it is explicit they must actually vote in secret. I would also note that the law does maintain the interesting tradition of the flying box—the portable ballot box, but sufficient safeguards have been built into it to prevent manipulation. The three areas that IFES has concentrated on the most in trying to advise the Central Election Commission and effect the election law development over the last 2 years was in tabulation and counting of votes, adjudication of complaints, and campaign finance regulation and reporting. And there was much criticism after the 1993 elections that the tabulation process was not transparent; in fact, there was much speculation, and many people argued that the counting and tabulation had been interfered with.

I have never really believed the studies—or never really adopted the viewpoint of the studies—that came to that conclusion only because they did not have access to the data. That is what is most suspicious about the 1993 process: one really could not track election results up and down the chain of election commissions through the tabulation. Specifically, you really could not get hold of the protocols from the polling places.

In 1993, 2 or 3 weeks before the election, suddenly the Central Election Commission had to announce—and I think this was a pragmatic and practical decision, but one that is fraught with capacity for manipulation—they announced that the next level of counting after the polling place commissions would be administrative offices of the government. There had not been any provision for any kind of intermediary body to take ballots and protocols from the polling places and count at the level below district. This time, an important element of the new election law built into the election commission hierarchy is a new level of commission, the territorial commission.

So you have a polling place commission; territorial commission; district commission (which is the voting constituency, 225 of those that are half the members of the state Duma); the regional commission (which really has no function in tabulation this time, but does have a role in providing ballot materials and financing and other administrative support); then the top, the Central Election Commission.

Besides institutionalizing a territorial commission in the hierarchy, an important element of the new law is a specific requirement that at each level, when they draw up their own

protocol of what their tabulated aggregated results are, each level must also publish or provide at the same time and ultimately publish a summary table of all the protocols from the next lower commission level.

That is, the territorial commission not only has to tell you what their total votes are in each category; they also have to provide a summary table that will list all the polling places and the aggregate totals from those polling places they have relied upon at the territorial level. At the district level, they must have a summary table of all the totals they have relied upon from the territorial level, and so forth. This is important because last time there was not such a thing, and it was impossible to trace and track election results up and down the chain. I will quickly mention that we have worked hard to impress upon them the need for not just speedy adjudication of complaints, but also some kind of recordkeeping so that they will at least organize something approaching a body of law for consistency and accountability as far as decisions of election commissions in handling complaints and grievances. Finally, and maybe most important, an interesting thing to follow during this election in December will be the degree to which the new rules requiring recording of campaign finance information through banks are enforced. Basically, the national banks are the repositories for accounts for each candidate and for each party bloc. Party blocs are running in the proportional party list vote, the candidates running in the single mandate. Those accounts are to be the sole means by which they fund their campaign. All resources must go in the account. All expenditures must be from that account. Now, already there are allegations that parties and candidates are operating outside those accounts. The law is quite specific that that is illegal, and that you can actually have your election voided if it is demonstrated that you have been spending money or using resources outside the account. The banks are required to report to the election commissions the receipts every 3 days, or 3 days after they come in, and the commissions have, in fact, requested that they also report expenditures in those accounts. So we will be able to track what parties and the candidates are saying they are raising and spending, and hopefully there will be some means of evaluating whether or not the real world campaigning seems to reflect they have stayed within the bounds of the law. Thank you.

Ms. Taft. Thank you, Mr. Dahl, for that clear explanation of some technical aspects of the elections. Next we will have Dr. Aron.

Mr. Aron. Thank you very much. I would like very briefly point to a few things to watch in these elections that would, I think, help us to chart Russia's political course beyond December 17th.

Well, the first thing to watch pertains to the governability and legitimacy of these elections, and that is, of course, the turnout and the number of people who vote or the percentage of the voters who, in effect, disenfranchise themselves by giving their votes to those parties that will not get over the 5 percent barrier. In effect, if you have, say, a quarter of the electorate voting for the parties that will not surmount 5 percent, you have a quarter of the population that, for one reason or another, took themselves out of the electoral process, and the legitimacy of the elections would be severely undermined. I believe that at this point we probably will have close to 10 or 12 percent of people voting for the parties that will not make it into the Duma. I think this is also an allowable amount of disenfranchising, but as you may be aware, this is a problem. This is a problem that has been raised in the Duma. This is a problem based on which some members proposed to change the electoral law. But then obvi-

ously with 42 or 43 parties on the ballot, you have the opposite problem if everybody gets into the Duma. You will have a heartily ungovernable body. So this is one of the things to watch.

The second factor, as I mentioned before, is the voter turnout. This is extremely important. You know, it is set very low at this point, 25 percent, for it to be legitimate. I believe that is a realistic goal. Anything below that would signify a voter disenfranchisement at the level where I think an effective democracy will be in a great deal of pain. So in my view, the voter turnout will exceed 25 percent and will certainly not fall below it. Nevertheless, nothing is outside the realm of possibilities.

The second most important issue, I think, in these elections is its implications for the Presidential election, particularly as regards Boris Yeltsin. Also, I would like specifically to spend some time on the dilemmas that certain outcomes will pose for the Russian left, which is likely to do rather well in these elections.

First, the Russian political class at this point largely looks at these Duma elections as giant primaries for the Presidential elections. They will look at them both in terms of the parties, but more important, in terms of the leadership. I believe that we ought to watch four major blocs. Obviously, the Communists and everybody to the left of them. It is quite surprising, and I think this is one severe problem in the Russian electoral process, that the Communist Party of the Russian Federation led by Gennady Zyuganov is sort of central-left. This, of course, is essentially covering up a giant hiatus in the Russian political spectrum, which I believe in 1993 gave us Zhirinovskiy because people simply could not find other homes for themselves, the ones who were not with the radical Democrats, but also the ones who did not want to vote for the Communists. Things are somewhat better now with Nash Dom Rossiya, Our Home is Russia, or as Boris Federov, my favorite wit in Russia, calls it Nash Dom Gosprom. He still cannot forget that Chernomyrdin actually did accept his resignation when he resigned. So Communists on the left is one bloc to watch. Nash Dom Rossiya is the second bloc to watch. Congress of the Russian Communities is the third one, and the fourth (again, this is not a bloc in any technical sense, but as a sort of political locale) is the Democrats led by Gaidar and Yabloka and a few parties in between.

So these are the four major blocs. As you may have noticed, I omitted the Liberal Democratic Party led by Zhirinovskiy. I do not think it will do very well. It will certainly do worse than in 1993. In any case, simply the dynamics of the process is such that I think the type of politics that Zhirinovskiy exemplified and with which obviously he was very successful in 1993 is no longer appealing to any significant share of the Russian voters.

Now, let us talk about the implications for various outcomes. Let me start first with the Democrats and the Nash Dom Rossiya.

As for those two, if either of them does well or both of them do well (by that, I mean if they both manage to get 40 percent of the vote cumulatively), I think, first of all, we could probably sleep better. Second, I think that would mean that among the factors that push Yeltsin toward running for presidency next year or, in fact, prompt him not to run, I believe a strong showing by the Democrats and by Nash Dom Rossiya would be a factor against his running. First of all, it is because his identity will be blurred. I mean, after all, he is for most of the things that those two blocs are for. Nevertheless, most important, I think he would simply be relieved not to worry for his political life—or, for that matter, his physical life. In the case of these two, nothing is for certain in Russian politics, but I think he can reasonably count on some dignified retirement.

Now, a few words about Yeltsin currently. I think in the Russian political spectrum today, he's a political equivalent of the black hole in astronomy, the star at the end of its life cycle, short on fuel, and very short on light, but still extremely huge in mass and exerting an enormous gravitational pull on everything around it.

Yeltsin's decision—whether to run or not to run, and if not to run, then who to throw his support and most likely the support of the state behind—would be enormously significant for the prospects of various candidates in the next election. So let us assume now that it is the Communists that do very well. The situation gets rather complicated here.

First let me discuss a few dilemmas that it poses to the Communists themselves, and here we could not help but notice the lesson of the Polish elections, which the Russian political class, particularly the Communists and the president, for obvious reasons, watched very closely. If Communists do well, that poses to them the following dilemma. If it could happen in Poland, it could happen anywhere, literally anywhere in the world. If the Poles saw fit to elect a former Communist president, it certainly is well possible that it could happen anywhere else. Now, that poses a second set of issues for the Communists, specifically for Zyuganov.

?????In the absence of the moderate left in Russian politics—and as I said before, this hiatus is, I think, extremely important but also extremely damaging to the survival of Russian democracy—the dilemma before Zyuganov was always a bird in hand, which he's 25 percent if they all turn out, very disciplined, most of them over 50 and 60 [years old], Communists, old Stalinist horses that hear the trumpet and go vote, and you know they could be counted on.????

Or try to expand his appeal at the risk of losing some of that firm base that he has. Well, a strong showing in this election, and by that I mean I think the Communists are virtually assured of getting 15 percent. I think anything above 20 percent I would consider a strong showing. I think that they will probably get close to 20 percent in these elections.

That plus the Polish experience makes it very tempting for Zyuganov to do what Kwasniewski did in Poland, that is, start moving the party. Of course, Kwasniewski had done it long before, but timing is not the forte of Russian history, so it would have to be done quickly. Zyuganov could, in fact, start mellowing in his rhetoric and taking himself as a potential candidate closer to the center. Now, this dilemma currently has already presented itself, and in the most recent news from Russia, apparently some of his followers are leaving the Communist Party of the Russian Federation, already perceiving Zyuganov as too moderate and, in fact, there is a rather scary potential alliance with the Congress of Russian Communities (the Congress of Russian Communities is my fourth bloc. I will speak of it a bit later), although not on a mass scale. The formal offer of cooperation was rejected by both sides. Nevertheless, some of his supporters, both within the party and among the electorate, are feeling that he is already too moderate, too social democratic which, of course, is a dirty word for both the members and the core electorate. So the interesting thing to see, in the case of the strong showing by the Communists, is which way Zyuganov will go. Finally, as far as the Congress of Russian Communities is concerned, it is a bit murkier, partly because one does not know how much trust one ought to put in their platform. After all, both Skokov and Lebed have not been tested in any open political process. One could say, though, that as for Yeltsin's prospects, I think a strong showing by the Congress of Russian Communities, particularly if that coincides with a strong showing by the Communists, in my view, would

prompt Yeltsin very much to run, and that is because, first of all, Lebed, unlike Zyuganov, interestingly enough, has already listed Yeltsin's crimes. The three crimes that he officially listed in an interview last year were the dissolution of the Soviet Union, of course; the events of the 3rd and 4th of October 1993; and, of course, the corruption which is now, in fact, the message of the current political commercials run by the Congress of Russian Communities, the fight with the thieving bureaucrats.

Now, no single factor would determine Yeltsin's decision to run or not to run, but again, the Polish elections offer a very interesting lesson, I think, to Yeltsin. He was very much in the same position as Lech Walesa. He is in the same position as Lech Walesa was before the election, miserable showing, general sort of ennui whenever you mention Yeltsin, virtually no prospects for any democratically elected position in the government, much less the presidency, except when you go head to head with the Communists. In my view, it is a paradox. A strong showing by the Communists or Communist Nationalists in these elections is both a very bad thing for Yeltsin for the reasons that I have mentioned, and a very good thing for him because as I am sure he hopes in the case of Walesa in Poland, when you have a very realistic threat of a potential Communist presidency, who do you go to? Yavlinsky? Chernomyrdin? No.

You turn to the proven battle horse, the barricade fighter. You forget all the silly things that he has done or said because after all, fighting Communists is all that Yeltsin does well and that, in fact, is the base of his legitimacy, which is why, incidentally, his legitimacy and his popularity is so low now because people forget or believe that that threat no longer exists. So in the case of a strong showing by the Communists, I think we could be fairly assured that Boris Yeltsin will be a candidate in the 1996 Presidential elections.

Ms. Taft. Thank you very much. Dr. Stavrakis.

Mr. Stavrakis. Thank you. I was asked to talk a bit about Russia's regions in the upcoming elections, and the Kennan Institute has been, since late 1991, interested in focusing on Russia's regions. In addition, personally I have spent a lot of time working in the regions. My particular interests, by the way, are in the Republic of Karelia in the northwest, somewhat in Yaroslavl, Oblast, and most recently in Krasnodar Krai, three very different places. Nevertheless, before I begin, I want to give you the basic pitch that regions matter because we have a Moscow-centric view, and the regional developments probably matter more than the upcoming elections do. I think that is regrettable, but I think it is true. I do agree with Leon's assessment that elections are gigantic primaries for Presidential elections. In fact, I tend to characterize the upcoming elections as the successful addition of a new card that the elite can play in the game of power politics. But there is an interesting linkage between Moscow and the regions: The elite operates in Moscow, yet much of the power is regionally based, particularly in the upper chamber, which is headed by Vladimir Shumeiko. I will have a bit more to say about him in a moment.

But from the standpoint of the regions, the general perspective really focuses on even less than the four blocs that Leon mentioned. The Communists are clearly *primus inter pares*, first among equals of all the blocs or parties competing in the regions. The Congress of Russian Communities is less so, but the figure of Alexander Lebed is really an immense drawing magnet. When I was in Krasnodar last week, our entire group was displaced from the Platan Hotel, the finer digs in Krasnodar; the entire hotel was evacuated because Lebed and Skokov and their delegation were coming, and they resided in the Platan Hotel. They

took up the entire hotel.

At subsequent meetings with the Krasnodar administration and the public, we inquired about how Lebed and Skokov were received. Skokov was given a respectable welcome, but, we were told, Lebed was hailed as a conquering hero. Those were the words reported to us, not mine. So he has immense popularity, but he is an untested political figure. Those are the two most important blocs, I think, from a regional perspective.

Chernomyrdin's Nash Dom Rossiya will probably get some votes, but much less than either of the first two, principally because it is viewed as a Moscow-based party. Yabloko is also viewed as a Moscow-based party, but may actually get more votes from those people who favor reform in the regions, and those are less than in Moscow and St. Petersburg. Just to move on briefly to the regional-center relationship, I think it is important to point out that the central question of who holds the balance of power in that relationship is a very interesting one. Were I to base it solely on places like the Republic of Karelia or Yaroslavl, it would be clear to me that the center holds the balance. Nevertheless, it is equally clear that in Krasnodar, central authorities are aware of the fact they have to curry favor with an immensely important region. Krasnodar is now the only remaining region that borders on the Black Sea and is therefore home to the Port of Novorossiisk. It is also home to an unusually and surprisingly vibrant resurgence of the Cossacks. There is now, as I was told by the former mayor of Krasnodar, not the equivalent but virtual dual power in existence in Krasnodar—the Cossack administration with their own structures as well as the regular administration. Fortunately, there has been more done in Krasnodar to foster good relations between those two than in other Cossack communities throughout Southern Russia and Ukraine.

Krasnodar, as many of you are aware, also goes by the name of Kuban'. The Kuban' is composed historically of two regions, Taman' and Kerch. Taman' is that region which currently is Krasnodar; Kerch is Crimea. So when one speaks of Kuban', you speak of both of those parts of Kuban', as the Cossacks do.

So it is immensely important for its international as well as its geopolitical location. That has meant that you have seen not just Lebed and Skokov. Nikita Mikhailkov, one of the triumvirate of the Nash Dom Rossiya ticket, along with Chernomyrdin, paid a visit to attend the 135th anniversary celebration of the renaming of the Black Sea Cossacks to the Kuban' Cossacks and was prominently on display there.

It is an important agricultural region which, as a consequence, has undergone no substantive privatization in agriculture and probably never will. Not just the administration currently there, but virtually everyone speaks of privatization as inappropriate for Krasnodar. So it is really a function of the resources and advantages that a region provides that are most essential, I think, in determining the balance between Moscow and the region. Some regions such as Tiumen' have important cards to play, or Tatarstan, or Yakutia, or Sakha as it's called. On the other hand, there are less-advantaged regions, and they are much more subject to the diktat of Moscow. Karelia lives in secret, or semi-secret, fear that its increasingly comfortable relationship with Finland will eventually be cut short by Moscow, and Moscow has already made several efforts to cut a variety of advantages that Karelia has received in previous years.

But the most interesting thing that I wanted to concentrate on—and I will close with this—is why the anti-reform vote is linked to an excessively Moscow-based view. Just very recently, the analytical center (it has been upgraded to an analytical upravlenie or analytical

administration of the president of the Russian Federation) published a very interesting and useful collection of data on the eighty-nine subjects of the federation, "Russia on the Eve of the Elections," and included within that was information about the standard of living. I only received this on my last trip for it had just come out, but in the last day or two I have gone through some statistics on standard of living, to give you a sense of the difference between Moscow and the regions.

One statistic is provided for reported per capita wages in July 1995. This is obviously going by reported wages, and uses the Russian Federation as a standard of 100. I compared that to a second statistic, the subsistence minimum for the same month, also with a Russian Federation standard of 100. Apparently the analytical center uses subsistence minimums of varying sizes, depending upon what region you are, trying to take account of government subsidies and such like.

I tabulated the difference between these for the 77 republics, oblasts, and two cities. I did not include autonomous okrugs or autonomous oblasts. Of the 77, the number of regions in July 1995 where reported wages actually exceeded subsistence level was 12. One might say, "Well, you know, maybe the way in which they are playing with data," because as Mark Twain said, "There are two kinds of statistics, damn lies and statistics," and Soviet statistics are more of the "damn lie" variety. But if we instead take a simple uniform standard for the Russian Federation, you still do not get much better results. Only 19 regions exceeded the Russian Federation's minimum subsistence level.

Within that small group of a dozen, some regions exceed the minimum by 10 percent. Interestingly, some of the central Russian oblasts or provinces exceed it by 30 or 40. But the big winner is Moscow, which exceeds it by a figure of 186. In other words, the average wage is 100; the minimum wage was calculated at 130, but the average Moscow wage was 316. No figure comes even remotely close to that for any other region. St. Petersburg also is a respectable plus 11. In other words, the two major cities that we tend to focus on for our own purposes and say, "This is what Russia is," are the exception.

In the vast majority of regions, there are large and often painful disparities in the negative column. One last point about that. Suppose one simply dismisses this data, saying, "Well, all of these statistics can be done away with. I mean, they are playing with numbers. They are cooking the books." That doesn't change one bottom line fact: The president of the Russian Federation government has produced a document that says that more than 75 percent of all regions are living below subsistence levels. If I wanted to cook the books, I would do it differently. The other thing is, selling reform in those kinds of conditions is very hard, and that, I think, is what is driving a very strong resentment to reform in the regions. Since we have placed a great store on decentralizing and Federalizing the system, we shouldn't be surprised at these results.

Ms. Taft. Thank you very much. Mr. Goble.

Mr. Goble. Thank you very much. If on the 18th or 19th of December we do not have a U.S. Government shutdown or a snowfall predicted, and that there is coverage of the results of the Russian elections in this town, it seems to me that we can predict very easily what will be focused on.

Either we will have those who will celebrate the mere fact that elections have taken place in Russia again, and that will be adduced as evidence that Russia has indeed made the transition to democracy and now we can get on with clearing off the snow. Alternatively,

given that even the best estimates for the reform parties suggest that they will not do all that well, that means that the anti-reform parties will have done relatively well if you add them together.

There will be those who will predict disaster with respect to Russia's transition to a market economy, and we will see both kinds of reporting, as I say, in the absence of a government shutdown or snow. But it seems to me that in looking at the Russian elections that way, we are making a big mistake, and since I was asked to talk about the impact of the Russian elections on Russian foreign policy, I am delighted that is so.

I am completely convinced that these elections in December are going to matter relatively little in terms of making any fundamental change in the direction of Russia's domestic development. Instead, the expression of anger and the rage of the outsiders and the aggrieved is going to have a far more profound set of consequences for Moscow's foreign policy, both with regard to its neighbors and ultimately with regard to the United States.

What I would like to do very quickly is, first, make the argument as to why I believe the elections themselves will not matter so much domestically, but rather, in terms of foreign policy; second, to look at three foreign policy strands that I think we can imagine a shift taking place in the Kremlin's foreign affairs; and finally, talk a little bit about the way in which we will read or misread what happens.

I think the first thing we have to recognize, as Tom Graham and others have pointed out, is that since Mr. Yeltsin's suppression of the Supreme Soviet in October 1993 and the fraudulent adoption of the new Russian constitution in December of that year, when the books were really cooked, the locus of Russian politics has been within the executive branch rather than between the executive and the legislature.

We do not have a situation in Russia where the legislature matters nearly as much as it does here, nor as much as it did before October 1993. Consequently, even if the composition of the Parliament is radically changed, that is not going to matter all that much by itself, given the ability of the Russian president to rule by decree, to impound funds, to refuse to spend money, or to spend money from what are called extra-budgetary means.

The reality is that we have a Presidential government in Moscow. We do not have a parliamentary one. It is true, that what happens within the Parliament will have an effect on the balance of power within the executive branch, but it will not be a direct impact. The reading that the parties that win are suddenly going to implement the program that is carried out is a big mistake.

Second, it seems to me that given that the reformers are unlikely to do very well, and indeed, even if they did as well as the 40 percent maximum (which I think is a very optimistic read—that still means you have two-thirds of the population voting for something very different, and that means that the reformers, the people who have taken a more atlanticist and more tolerant view, are now going to have a lesser say), it seems to me that the consequence will be that the central government will respond to these changes as it has in the past, by sharpening up Moscow's foreign policies, and especially with regard to what Russians like to call the "near abroad," namely, Russia's neighbors, to demonstrate that Mr. Yeltsin retains the loyalty of the Russian people across the board.

There are few issues that bridge almost the entire political spectrum more than a notion that Russia should take a tougher line vis-a-vis the neighbors. Consequently, given that the more moderate elements are not going to be anywhere close to 50 percent, that kind of

thing would be a reasonable expectation for Yeltsin to do next.

Finally, as has been pointed out, because these elections are very much seen in Russia as a prelude to a possible Russian Presidential vote next summer, it seems to me Mr. Yeltsin's entourage will try, in the best tradition of competitive politics, to try to blame someone for Russia's problems rather than to take responsibility for them. Blaming the West, the World Bank, the IMF, the United States, is an extraordinarily popular thing. You can blame those institutions for not sending enough money and certainly for sending too many advisors. That will be a very popular thing to say, and it would be a natural response for Mr. Yeltsin and his entourage, because one thing this election will do is provide a kind of polling, in the normal American sense, a result more accurate than most Russian polls that seem fairly well cooked.

Now, what we will see regarding the foreign policy coming out of this election will be that the Russians will move first in areas where they can clearly succeed; second, in areas where they probably can succeed; and finally, in an area where they will only hope to succeed. With virtually every passing week, we have seen the Russian government and Mr. Yeltsin make an evermore extravagant set of claims regarding Moscow's right to have a sphere of influence on the territory of the former Soviet Union. You need only read the September 14th document, or indeed, the statements of virtually every leader of every political party in this election about what should be done.

As the result of this vote (which will be, I think, dominated by those who do not favor a more progressive and more live-and-let-live attitude toward others), there will again be a demand for a Western acknowledgment concerning this region. There will be more nonsense said about Moscow's right to intervene on behalf of the 25 million ethnic Russians abroad. I guarantee it. We will see that in January and February, we will see it right up through the Presidential election, and we will be expected to forget that Moscow is asking for something that international law does not allow. In fact, Moscow is speaking for people who are overwhelmingly, to the tune of 95 percent, citizens of other countries. But that will be conveniently forgotten, at least in Washington. I think that these things will also lead to a more assertive policy with regard to military influence, having seen a cave on the CFE. I think we will see more of that.

Second, I think we are going to see Mr. Yeltsin argue even more forcefully against NATO enlargement. Since it has been largely accepted in this city that any projection of NATO would necessarily strengthen the Russian right, the strength of the Russian right will be used now by Mr. Yeltsin to demand not to extend NATO lest NATO provoke more of that and make his re-election or the election of someone who is a committed reformer in the middle of 1996 impossible. I think that we are going to see a renewed anti-NATO campaign in the beginning of 1996.

Finally, I think especially with regard to the broader foreign policy agenda, Moscow is going to try to play a more traditional role of dividing Europe from the United States, especially over the issue of Bosnia, which will be used as an occasion for dividing the West and ultimately weakening what NATO there is.

How are we likely to respond? Well, as Professor Brzezinski observed, there is always a choice. You can treat Russia as a partner, as an enemy, or as a problem. There are many people who are going to be inclined to try to continue to treat Russia as a partner, at least in terms of the rhetoric.

The problem is that people here do not mean to treat Russia as a partner. Increasingly,

and especially in terms of the electoral season that we have just gone through and the electoral season we are going to have ahead of us for the presidency of Russia, there will be the tendency here for people to say that Russian officials and Russian politicians do not mean what they say with regard to the neighboring countries or with regard to their foreign policy initiatives, but must merely say these things for a domestic constituency or in order to win elections.

That dismissive attitude and refusal to respond to any of these statements has the effect of patronizing the Russians, of treating them as less than serious people, and also leads some Russians to conclude that they have now established a new baseline beyond which they can push still farther.

To say that, however, is not to argue that we need to treat Russia as an enemy. It is true that Russia presently is much too weak to threaten the United States directly and very much needs our help and understanding. Unfortunately, neither the help nor the understanding has been in much supply in recent days and we are in a situation where we must treat Russia as it has always been: a problem.

That is to say, we must take Russia seriously and not simply dismiss everything we have heard in the last 6 months and we will hear in the next 8 months as meaningless campaign rhetoric. If democracy means anything, if elections mean anything, they mean that people run on platforms of what they intend to do, and when those people are in office, for people to dismiss those remarks as simply electioneering is the most dangerous form of self-delusion. But that is, in fact, what we have been seeing.

I am afraid that the consequences of treating a number of statements that have been made, including Mr. Yeltsin's decree on September 14th with regard to the neighboring countries, we have a situation where that we will see only more extravagant demands made. The real tragedy of these elections is likely not to be inside Russia, but in Russia's relationship with the world. At some point the Russians, having concluded they can get away with what they have said, will cross a line we have not drawn, and then we will respond too harshly. Then Russia will not be a problem; it will become an enemy, and we will have a much bigger problem. Thank you.

Ms. Taft. Before I open the floor to questions from the audience, I would ask if any of the panelists wish to respond to their colleagues.

OK. We would like to take some questions from the floor. I ask that you use the microphone over here so we can hear the question, and if you would please identify yourself.

Questioner. Good afternoon. Igor Bosenko [sp], a reporter with the Russian news agency TASS. Maybe I missed the beginning of the discussion, but have you ever touched the problem of 5 percent ceiling established by the Russian election law?

Mr. Aron. Yes.

Questioner. It has already been discussed here? I just want to, if you could maybe shortly comment to me because there is the discussion right now either to repeal that part of the election law or maybe to modify it somehow.

Mr. Aron. With apologies to everybody else, I will just have to repeat exactly what I said before. There is always a problem that a significant share of Russian voters will disenfranchise themselves by voting for those parties that would not make it over 5 percent. In fact, in addition to the four blocs that I mentioned, I could only add, Women of Russia and the Liberal Democratic Party of Russia, which makes six, that I think will make it into the Duma

out of 43 other parties. So let us hope that percentage is not large, but I predicted here before that it probably would be 10 to 12 percent of the total voters. I think anything beyond that would be rather threatening to the Russian democracy.

Mr. Dahl. I will just add from an election law standpoint, the choice of a 5 percent threshold is really a policy decision that the Duma has agreed to. It was the percentage used previously, but in virtually all the proportional representations of which I am aware, there is a threshold of some kind, usually 3, 4, 5 percent. Four percent is common in Eastern Europe and 5 percent is not particularly unreasonable.

The court in Russia recently declined to rule on this, saying it wasn't a constitutional issue. I think they are correct that one might argue that at some point, a 25 percent threshold or something might so severely infringe upon the right of electing people guaranteed by the constitution that it would be a constitutional issue. Nevertheless, the 5 percent threshold is purely a policy decision and frankly, the parties now are waking up to the fact that they are not in a very good political setting.

But it's really a choice they've made. If the Duma wished to change the rules at the tail end of the election process, that could be done, but I think it is a bad precedent to open the election law a month after the election and say, "Gee, there are features we aren't so comfortable with now, based upon the political situation."

Mr. Stavrakis. I just wanted to add that just as I was leaving Russia last week, the talk had switched from somehow finding a way to postpone the elections to perhaps nullifying the results, which actually seems like a more reasonable way to do it. You find out what the results are, then you decide to get rid of them, if needed.

The basis for that reasoning was that if the constitutional court decided this is not a constitutional issue, that could be used as an argument in the Duma to claim that it is therefore a legislative issue. In the intervening period after the parliamentary elections, before the new Duma comes in, new legislation could be passed which effectively nullifies that result. Whether that is true or not, and how possible that is, there is no way to assess. I just put that out there because I know that in Russia, all things are possible, but that does not necessarily mean they will happen. But it is a testament to the shakiness of the foundations of electoral democracy in Russia that you can casually talk about nullifying the results and then switching to something else.

Questioner. I am Loren Homer with Law and Liberty Trust, and this is a follow-up to what Mr. Goble was saying. One concern I have had is not so much that the Presidential apparatus is running the country, but that there is a type of Mafia/KGB business interest structure that is really running things behind the scenes. This group has really only one interest, which is to preserve the power and the resources that it has grabbed, and it is not going to be very happy if that power has to be redistributed among a large group of people that are suffering so much because of the inequalities. I just wondered if you could comment on how you think that will play out in the event of a Communist victory.

Mr. Goble. I completely agree whether you have a Communist victory or a victory by anyone else. I think that the government of Russia is a government which is not an institutionalized kind of regime. It is a congeries of powers. It is semi-feudal without the elegance of feudal interlocking directorates. What you have is not a state, but rather the privatization of organized crime in many ways.

Tragically, the West's celebration of the events of October 1993 and the new constitution gave these people the opportunity in the economic sphere to have exactly the analog of

the view “no cessation from cessation.” In other words, we will never allow anybody to have self-determination within one of the countries that we allowed to emerge, and now we will not allow any further re-division of property because what we have had is nomenklatura privatization in large—not exclusive—measure.

Therefore, we have a group of various groups within that we are pleased to call the executive branch who are not responsible to the Parliament, who are not responsible all that much to the public.

The fact that one can talk about canceling the elections or nullifying the elections if the elections go wrong says a lot. If there were a Communist majority (which won't happen), and if that Parliament voted to re-socialize or re-nationalize property, there would be a large number of people who would say even if that is the will of the Russian people, even if that is what the Russian people voted for, they should be blocked. We would then end up supporting an action by whatever we are going to call this central government to come down like a ton of bricks on that Parliament, up to and including dissolving it, up to and including putting off Presidential elections.

The dangerous thing about democracy is that people do not always vote the way you like. What the Russian government has done with its December 1993 constitution is to create a situation where if they vote the wrong way, it probably does not matter too much for this elite group around the president. That is what is really scary. We are looking at these either as a technical issue or as a competition as we would talk about a parliamentary election in Britain, when what we are really talking about is a polling device which various groups within this government will use to decide how to play the next move.

You are exactly right to call attention to the fact that we are not talking about a responsible government in any sense, neither to the Parliament nor to the people. If it is responsible to anyone, it may be to its own Swiss bank accounts and to the IMF.

Questioner. Just a follow-up question, particularly in the regional aspect. What is the potential for violence in the middle of this with Lebed and the army on one side and this group on the other?

Mr. Stavrakis. For the most part, the potential for violence is a concern in a place like Krasnodar because of the Cossack divisions in the army now. They have fought in Moldova, fought in Abkhazia, they are now in Chechnya. They are producing veterans that continue their organization.

Over the next couple of years, in a place like Krasnodar, you will have between 5,000 and 7,000 veterans of really tough wars: young men, armed in Cossack divisions that retain their organizational structure. That is a real cause for concern. I do not see that is a possibility in many other places. I cannot say for all other places, but as a rule, the possibility of violence to me is low, but that one important region is one that I find very interesting because of these unresolved questions.

There really is a coercive power emerging that has not yet been integrated in the system. The most interesting relationship to see in Russia is what will happen to the personality of Lebed, and what will happen in relations between Lebed and Aleksandr Korzhakov, because these are really the two coercive axes. Whether they achieve denouement or one is marginalized by the other is going to be essential for that.

Questioner. Ben Niederland [sp] with Senator William Cohen's office. My question, I guess, is for Mr. Goble. If Mr. Kozyrev wins his election in Murmansk, who might the new

foreign minister be? Will it matter who the new foreign minister is in terms of the direction of foreign policy?

Mr. Goble. Oh, one would be very reluctant to say that who is foreign minister does not matter, although I put it to you that if you trace Mr. Kozyrev's statements over the last 3 or 4 years, there is more than one Mr. Kozyrev. I like to use as the standard his Stockholm ???opera bouffe??? speech in December 1992 because in that standard, the bad people have already taken over. I am not convinced that he will be replaced even if he wins simply because I think the people around Yeltsin—let's use that locution—are afraid that once you start making changes, all kinds of things are open.

I do not think it will be terribly dramatic, you know, who you get. I can imagine Lukin as a foreign minister. I can imagine Mamedov, who is very effective at managing the Americans, depending on how important they think managing the Americans is. But I would suggest that the general thrust of policy will continue.

It will be accelerated by these elections.

Questioner. Steve Vost [sp] from the Institute for Science and International Security. I was wondering how anyone sees the various permutations that might show up after the elections affecting START II ratification—if it could just go down in a ball of anti-Western flame or if there is a combination that might work.

Mr. Goble. I will take a crack at it. I think that the threat of START II not being ratified will be made and used to extract a variety of concessions, just as the threat of ignoring CFE limits was used to extract those concessions.

In some ways, Mr. Yeltsin will be delighted to have a Parliament that by its nature would not be inclined to ratify START II because that makes it even more likely that he can make demands for concessions elsewhere.

Going down in flames is not an analogy I would like to use in an arms control sense for all kinds of reasons, but, in fact, I think there are going to be real difficulties.

Mr. Aron. If I may address that, I think there is another much closer issue, and that is the Russian troops in Bosnia. I believe that could very well be another casualty of the elections. In fact—I may still eat my hat—I've said for quite a while that there will not be Russian soldiers in Bosnia, and that Yeltsin pulled that rabbit out of the hat in Hyde Park for some reasons into which we will not go now, but that it is also a useful sort of thing to have, like a ballast on a ship when the ship goes down. You could always play that card, saying that Russian soldiers will never serve under an American general or under any other foreigner at an opportune moment. I still think that is quite a possibility.

Ms. Taft. Any other questions? Yes.

Questioner. I am John Finerty on the commission staff. A question for Leon Aron, but really for everybody. You mentioned the possibility that the Communists would do well and look at the Polish example, and Zyuganov might say, "Well, maybe I can be Kwasniewski, too," but Zyuganov, in terms of charisma, is not really Kwasniewski. Would it be possible for the Communists to have somebody else waiting in the wings? Would Zyuganov say, "I'll let a younger man do it"?

Mr. Aron. Well, John, we talked about that before. It is quite an interesting thing to contemplate. It is certainly not in the tradition of Russian politics to step aside. But that would be a temptation for Zyuganov undoubtedly. The question is how much Zyuganov's personality and his lack of appeal or charisma would influence things if indeed his rhetoric

changes and if he makes that leap. Who knows? Maybe once he moves toward the center, even his personality kind of goes right out and gets on the treadmill and does all kinds of things.

But I think indeed that would be a fascinating thing to contemplate. I do not know of anyone who is standing next to him as again, in the Russian tradition, particularly in the Russian Communist tradition, you do not really groom somebody who is potentially more appealing than you are. So I believe that they are rather hard to find.

Ms. Taft. Yes?

Questioner. James Chandler. I am from the Center for Defense Information. There are a lot of Russian military, both former and current members, running in the elections, especially in the single districts. I wonder what you think the possibility of those people as a group doing elections?

Mr. Goble. I'll touch it; others can, too. As you may be aware, the Lawrence Livermore Labs recently completed a study about the political attitudes of the Russian mid-grade officer corps, those between major and colonel. One thing that this survey found—there was about 1,000 officers who were surveyed—was that the Russian officer corps believed that they had no choice but to use democratic institutions and, in fact, were quite committed to using democratic institutions, parliaments, to make sure that the military's voice was at least heard if not dominant. At the same time, however, the officer corps was overwhelmingly—85 percent plus—opposed to economic reform, in favor of socialism and even of rolling back some of the privatization that has taken place already as a way of saving their own professional interests, presumably, but at least it is interesting.

My own sense is the increasing military cast is going to have a number of implications. First, I think it is going to retard party formation because there is going to be this wonderful cross-cutting cleavage that is going to make party discipline even less in the next Parliament than in the past.

Second, I think you really are going to have the military's point of view articulated, or the militaries' points of view articulated on a regular basis. We will see how many actually get in. On the other hand, I hardly see this as the next step toward a sort of Francoist or Chilean model, with the military trying to take over the Parliament as a first step toward taking over the government and installing a Pinochet-type figure as some journalistic writings have suggested. If the military were interested in that as an outcome, running for the Parliament is probably not the best way to get there.

Mr. Aron. One thing I would like to add to Paul: I agree with what you said. It is a very splintered military. It is institutionally not cohesive, and it is also institutionally depressed, as it were: Chechnya, low salaries, non-payments. It is not an institution that would triumphantly take over the power.

There is no ideology that they could offer, and while in fact this is Lebed's strength, there are moments in nations' histories when the military is sort of the sole depository of national honor, and Russia may be coming to that point, but rather on an individual level, not as regards the institution of the army itself.

Mr. Stavrakis. I just want to add that one thing that is important to keep in mind is we do not know what the future shape of Russia is going to be in terms of a political system. We have been talking about politics in the sense that there is an understanding that we are moving toward political parties that reflect certain programs. I do not think that is what is

going to happen in Russia.

I think more likely it will be the development of a kind of corporatist structure that will reflect corporate groups elections will play a role in this system, but to what extent I do not know. This really resembles much more a kind of Japanese-style politics rather than American political parties that reflect discrete platforms.

I think in that respect the military may be an inhibiting factor in developing parties, but on the other hand, it may become an important element in a corporatist-type structure. Mr. Goble. I do not believe that Russia is a normal political system or it is moving toward political parties, but I believe the efforts to form political parties by people in the Parliament will simply be retarded. That is another reason that a corporatism will find it easier to take root, but it will be corporatism, and I like your Japanese analogy.

I think the limits of the Russian political system, however, are more up for grabs even than whether it will be corporatist or not. Three days ago, Izvestia had an article on the rebirth of the regional secessionist idea in the Far East in Khabarovsk. People who wrote off the issue of regional tensions since December 1993 have made an enormous mistake. Elections do produce, as you were talking about in your remarks, people who can claim to speak for the regions from which they are elected, and that provides another possibility for the coalescence of regional interests around particular personalities. That process also retards party development, and whether those people can be incorporated in any kind of political arrangement linked to Moscow remains to be seen.

Questioner. I would like to ask Paul Goble and Leon Aron whether they see any possibility of a coherent policy on the part of the United States that might improve the chances for democracy in Russia.

Mr. Goble. The short answer is no.

Mr. Aron. First the optimistic view.

Mr. Goble. The worst does not always happen. First, it would be nice if democracy were a policy as something we wanted to see happen. In fact, we have been far more concerned about economic reform. I would like to suggest that Marxist doctrine triumphed in Washington just as it collapsed in the Soviet Union where there were a group of people who became committed to the idea that economic reform mattered, but politics did not.

We have had a willingness to proclaim all and sundry in this part of the world democracies without being terribly worried about whether there are any democratic institutions like a free press or whether elections really mean anything.

It would be nice if we would be worried about democratic change. But I am very pessimistic because to talk, you confront the fact that most of these places are not democratic. I think of a wonderful old book, "Military Justice is to Justice as Military Music is to Music." Well, Russian democracy is a democracy in the same way. I do not think we have a commitment to pushing democratic change. After all, this is a city that celebrated the use of tanks to disperse the Russian Parliament in October 1993. This is a town that, having realized that the Russian constitution was ratified only by fraudulent means of changing the total number of voters so that you could get 50 percent plus one, claim to have voted for it, and having wanted to do that in the name of supporting a particular individual who we believe was committed to economic reform.

As a troglodyte cold war veteran—and I am proud of it—I am utterly appalled that we have a policy that makes it look like the Soviet charge that the cold war was designed to

make the world safe for Wall Street looks like it has some content. I would be a whole lot happier if we were worried a little bit less about economic reform and a whole lot more about a free press, about responsible governments, about actually having laws that are laws and that are enforced, and being worried in our evaluation of countries not by the percentage of enterprises that have been privatized, but by the number of newspapers and the number of opposition newspaper journalists who are not in jail. But that does not seem like a position that wins very much support, other than rhetorical support, in Washington. So I am very pessimistic. I think you could do it. I think we could have done a lot more in 1992. My fear is that we have missed the enormous opportunity in 1992 and 1993, and that with each passing year it is getting more difficult to make those kinds of differences. That is why the short answer is really no.

Mr. Aron. Well, first let me agree with Paul on the last point and that is that generally, I think that the opposition views of Russia are far more limited than we like to believe or even, for that matter, that the Russian political class likes to believe. I suppose this is similar to watching a play, and it is true that we have to first of all not sleep through it. We have to applaud at the right time and laugh at the right time and maybe cry at the right time. As you theater lovers know, there is a certain amount of synergism between the actor and the audience, and sometimes they do right things just by sensing what the feeling is. In general, I am afraid that there is little more that could be added to this metaphor apart, of course, from the National security issues. I mean, certainly, you know, doing certain things and not doing certain things in the National security field obviously requires response.

But I think your question was broader. It was the question of the Russian democracy. Now, on the Russian democracy, without reopening wounds with my friend, Paul Goble, I certainly do not view the current Russian government as a type of occupational government which is what, of course, various newspapers on the Russian national left claim it is. After all, President Yeltsin was elected by 40 or 50 million Russians. For all my respect for constitutional niceties, I'd rather see Yeltsin president than Khasbulatov and his friends, and not a single member of the Russian Parliament was ever killed or even jailed except those who were violently opposed to the regime.

This attack on the innocent Russian Parliament requires, of course, a correction. Paul, you know that it was not all of a sudden that the tanks rolled and the artillery started to fire. In any case, without going back to that, and without arguing whether the 50 percent plus 1 vote was there or not, let me say that there are tough moments in the rebirth or birth of democracies in backward authoritarian or post-totalitarian regimes that may justify having some sort of constitution, some workable political platform rather than have none at all and move toward bloodshed and fratricide.

In general, I think that we are going to witness an important election. It is not just a primary. Perhaps I should correct myself. Every election in a country that had none is very important. If we have the Presidential election, it is extremely important for two reasons: First, if it happens, it will be the first peaceful transition of executive power in the Russian history, barring a few lucky czars that did not get strangled by their wives or sons. But that, of course, would be extremely important and all I can say is that let us not compare Russia to the United States. Let us not compare Russia with Denmark or Iceland where democracies have been for two or three hundred years. Let us compare Russia to Turkmenistan, Kazakhstan. Let us compare Russia to Georgia. Let us compare Russia to Moldova and see how

political liberties and freedoms and standard of living, for that matter, fare there.

Mr. Goble. I wanted to footnote three things. First, democracy is not about outcomes; it is about process. Once you decide that outcomes matter more than process, you are already in trouble. Once you say it is important that somebody wins, some particular person wins rather than someone else wins and that you will call it democracy no matter how he gets there, you have already gone down the line quite some ways.

I certainly would not want to be taken to say that Russia has not made remarkable strides, but that is not the same thing as to proclaim anything they do as necessarily democratic and meeting the standards required just because you compare it with Turkmenistan. I put it to you that when Mr. Yeltsin worked with Mayor Luzhkov of Moscow to expel people from his capital city in October 1993 because they had the wrong skin color, instead of reacting to this like a ton of bricks for being violating every kind of international norm you could name, not only did the United States say nothing, but it went around Europe telling people not to say anything, which is pretty bad. Instead of proclaiming this a triumph of democracy, we should call what happened in October 1993 a tragic situation, and the lesser of two evils emerged. But that is different from proclaiming it a triumph of democracy as—

Mr. Aron. Oh, I don't proclaim—

Mr. Goble. I'm sorry?

Mr. Aron. I don't proclaim—

Mr. Goble. No, but I am just trying to make very clear what I am saying. The third point I would make is that it is not our business—and I think it is terribly important that we know who is the president of Russia, or what the composition of the Parliament of Russia is. One thing that frightens me a great deal is suggestions by American officials that this group should be supported or not. Not only is it counterproductive because that is an albatross around their necks that they will probably drown with, but it is also presumptuous in the extreme to suggest that we know best who should run any other country. We do not even know best sometime who should run our country.

Mr. Stavrakis. I just wanted to jump in. As one of those people whose skin color happened to be dark enough to be stopped when Luzhkov issued that decree in 1993, I just wanted to inject my own reflections about U.S. policy and whether something could have been done that was better from the standpoint of regions.

The assistance program of the United States is a mess. I think that is putting it charitably. If you go out into the regions, you would be hard-pressed to find anybody that is in the crucial small- and medium-business sector or what we would like it to be. You will not find them receiving major assistance from USAID.

You will find billions of dollars that have disappeared into the black hole of Moscow. You will also find U.S. firms that have been provided assistance to work with regional enterprises who sell the shares they have bought to Moscow entities and then disappear with the profits. The assistance provided was not done for Russia; it was for Moscow, especially Muscovites who look like Americans and talk like Americans, who jabbered away about privatization and smiled and said all the right things at the right times. The result has been that moving into regions—this is based on personal information as well as general knowledge—the level of anti-Americanism (not anti-Westernism) is much higher.

I was told subsequent to my most recent visits to Karelia that the successor to the KGB, the FSB, Federal'naiia Sluzhba Bezopasnosti made their first visit back and wanted to know

why I was there, would I be coming back, and what was the purpose of my visit? They did not approach me, they spoke to the people that I contacted, and I think that was with particular intent. That had not happened to me before.

The legacy of the American assistance program is an exacerbation of a population that is exceptionally sensitive to having suffered through three-quarters of a century of Communism and being told that there is something better. The U.S. has come up quite short for that, and we are seeing the consequences of that right now.

I wish it was done better, and I agree with Paul, but I think we are in a diminishing spectrum where the ability to actually do something positive is narrowing. I still think something positive can be done, but not with the existing assistance structure.

Ms. Taft. Yes, one final question.

Questioner. Mark Norman of Senator Simon's office. Just to bring this back down to the more tactical aspects of the election itself, one thing that struck me is the way that people seem—the analysis seems—to discount Zhirinovsky and the Liberal Democrats. I was just wondering, what accounted for your discounting of his party. Where does that leave his electorate? Does it go to Lebed? What are the prospects of his electorate and him personally between now and the Presidential election?

Mr. Aron. I could take a crack at that. I do not know if you were here from the very beginning. I did mention a few things about why I think Zhirinovsky is not going to be—and, you know, there is no Liberal Democratic Party. There are Zhirinovsky and the people that sort of are in and out of that conglomerate called a Liberal Democratic Party. He is the vote getter. I believe that the Russian political system has matured somewhat beyond Zhirinovskys. Generally, Zhirinovsky, I mean, was not quite an aberration. There are a number of studies done by the Public Opinion Foundation and published by Igor Lyamkin in the "Polis" magazine, which I strongly recommend as probably the best publication now on Russian politics, which showed through the questions posed to those who voted for Zhirinovsky in 1993, it was a very strange electorate.

It was an electorate that in many respects disagreed with some major points of Zhirinovsky. For example, far fewer—less than half of them—supported his key idea, which is, you know, a reinstatement of the Soviet Union and sort of this national idea. Many of them were to the right or to the left of him on some critical issues.

His electorate is a very volatile electorate. I think this is the electorate that was searching for the electoral home, did not find any, wanted to express a protest, did not want to vote for Communists, did not want to vote for shock therapists, and voted for Zhirinovsky. He was the only one at that point. There are others now. That political spectrum between what in Russia is called radical liberal right, which is Gaidar, and radical left, which is Zyuganov, is now more or less filled with parties.

For that reason, I think Zhirinovsky will matter less and Liberal Democratic Party will matter less.

Ms. Taft. Well, on behalf of the commission, I want to thank each of you for participating today and the audience for coming.

[Whereupon at 3:45 p.m., the commission adjourned.]