

Soviet coup raises questions of effects, aid

Coup commanders could face death if found treasonous

MOSCOW (AP) - One week after the collapse of the coup that briefly toppled President Mikhail S. Gorbachev, 13 men accused of plotting the takeover were charged Wednesday with high treason, the Russian prosecutor's office said.

If the men are convicted, they could face death penalties.

In another move to punish the coup backers, the Supreme Soviet legislature passed a motion of no confidence in the Cabinet of Ministers.

Many of the cabinet members were implicated in the plot against Gorbachev last week.

The no-confidence vote, which was sought by Gorbachev, means the Cabinet of Ministers' approximately 70 members are now expected to resign.

But Gorbachev also lambasted the Supreme Soviet itself, asking why no one had stood up to the coup plotters and said: "Those bastards, where are they pushing the country?"

Control over the Soviet Union's large nuclear arsenal has been a concern since the abortive coup.

Wednesday, the Tass news agency said Russian Federation President Boris Yeltsin had offered to transfer to his republic all Soviet nuclear weapons now stationed in neighboring Ukraine if it becomes independent.

After the three-day coup, Gorbachev had angrily vowed that its ringleaders would be brought to justice.

Those charged with treason Wednesday included the seven surviving members of the coup committee.

An eighth member, Interior Minister Boris Pugo, was found dead after the coup, either slain or a suicide.

The Soviet legislature, meanwhile, heeding Gorbachev's bid to stem the collapse of central authority, voted Wednesday to send a delegation to the Ukraine to discourage the breadbasket republic's secessionist drive.

The delegation also will discuss potential border disputes with the Russian republic, which has thrown a scare into some of its neighbors by saying it reserves the right to review its frontiers with them.

Optimism for democracy suggested by A.P. poll

NEW YORK (AP) - About seven in 10 Americans want the United States to recognize the independence of breakaway republics in the Soviet Union, and a similar majority expects an orderly move toward democracy there, an Associated Press poll found.

President Bush has lagged behind many other Western leaders in recognizing the Baltic republics — Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia. But Robert Strauss, his new ambassador to Moscow, has hinted Bush may extend diplomatic recognition on Friday.

About three-quarters the 1,017 adults interviewed Friday through Tuesday said they approved of the way Bush is handling the situation. Only 11 percent disapproved. The remainder were unsure.

ICR Survey Research Group of Media, Pa., conducted the AP poll by telephone with a random national sample that has a margin of error of plus or minus 3 percentage points.

In addition, the poll's results are more tentative than most because the survey occurred over five days when Soviet unity and Communist Party power were disintegrating. Amid such rapid and complicated changes happening far from home, American public opinion may not have gelled.

A 56 percent majority said it is likely Boris Yeltsin will replace Mikhail S. Gorbachev as Soviet leader, while 32 percent said that is unlikely.

But nearly half those who think Gorbachev will be replaced still foresee success for his program. Among all those polled, 56 percent said it is likely Gorbachev will be successful in carrying out the changes he wants, and 34 percent said it is unlikely. Others were unsure.

Even more optimism was evident when the public rated the like-

lihood of these overlapping possible outcomes of the revolution in Moscow:

●An orderly move toward democracy in the Soviet Union. Likely: 69 percent. Unlikely: 24 percent.

●Democracy after a period of some violence. Likely: 57 percent. Unlikely: 32 percent.

●Civil war in the Soviet Union. Likely: 43 percent. Unlikely: 49 percent.

William Zimmerman, a professor of political science at the University of Michigan, said this optimism resulted from the remarkable non-violence of last week's events and the general lack of war between European states in recent years.

"With the exception of the civil war in Yugoslavia, which has been way undercovered by the Western press, particularly in the U.S., people don't think of violence in Europe," he said.

But, he said, if the Russian republic tries to redraw the boundaries of the existing republics, as some have suggested, widespread violence remains possible.

Did the outcome of the coup make Gorbachev a more reliable partner or less reliable partner for the United States to deal with? Americans split 44 percent to 32 percent on the question, with a quarter unsure. But only a fifth of those who expect Gorbachev to retain office see him as a less reliable partner.

Those results reflect Gorbachev's uncertain grip on power in the wake of last week's three-day coup. Despite his reinstatement, Gorbachev's presidency of a central-Soviet government in Moscow has been undermined by the ascendancy of opposition leader Yeltsin and his Russian federation, as well as the independence declarations of seven of the 15 republics.

Polling method

NEW YORK (AP) - The Associated Press poll on the Soviet upheaval was conducted Aug. 23-27 among a random sample of 1,017 adults in the contiguous 48 states.

Interviewing was done by telephone by ICR Survey Research Group of Media, Pa., part of AUS Consultant Cos.

The results were weighted to represent the population by key demographics such as age, sex, region and education.

Chance variations in the sample should not cause the results to vary from the answers of all Americans in households with children by more than 3 percentage points more than one time in 20. This margin of sampling error is larger for responses of subgroups, such as a region or age category.

There are other sources of potential error in polls, including the wording and order of questions. Here are the AP poll questions: (Because of rounding, sums may not total 100.)

1. Do you approve or disapprove of the way George Bush is handling the situation in the Soviet Union?

Approve: 76 percent. Disapprove: 11 percent. Don't know or no answer: 13 percent.

2. Did the outcome of the coup make Gorbachev a more reliable or less reliable partner for the United States to deal with?

More reliable: 44 percent. Less reliable: 32 percent. DK-NA: 25 percent.

3. Do you think the United States should or should not recognize the declared independence of the Soviet Union's breakaway republics, such as Lithuania?

Should recognize: 72 percent. Should not recognize: 10 percent. DK-NA: 17 percent.

4. Which of these do you think is likely to result from the recent events in the Soviet Union:

● **Success for Gorbachev in carrying out the changes he wants. Likely: 56 percent. Unlikely: 34 percent. DK-NA: 10 percent.**

● **Gorbachev being replaced as Soviet leader by Boris Yeltsin. Likely: 56 percent. Unlikely: 32 percent. DK-NA: 12 percent.**

● **An orderly move toward democracy in the Soviet Union. Likely: 69 percent. Unlikely: 24 percent. DK-NA: 7 percent.**

● **Democracy after a period of some violence. Likely: 57 percent. Unlikely: 32 percent. DK-NA: 12 percent.**

● **Civil war in the Soviet Union. Likely: 43 percent. Unlikely: 49 percent. DK-NA: 8 percent.**

New order could make Yugoslavia 'look like a picnic,' official says

Independent republics could lead to internal fighting

WASHINGTON (AP) - The republics of the USSR may go their separate ways in the emerging new world order, but those who study these matters are convinced: It isn't going to be pretty.

There are deep doubts that eight, 10 or more independent countries, each with its own currency, its economy, its capital, its languages, its flag, its foreign policy — and with its own minorities yearning to be free — can exist as economically viable nations.

Far worse, what the world may see evolving are language, ethnic and border disputes turning into massacres and the upheaval of vast populations.

The role model may turn out to be the new order in Yugoslavia, where Croats and Serbs are killing each other and what was once one country held together by the iron hand of communism is now uncommunist but splintering and bleeding.

"If this thing really starts going,"

“We're seeing at every level people who want self-determination and independence for themselves but they don't want to give self-determination and independence to smaller groups within their own borders.”

Garthoff
former U.S. ambassador to Bulgaria

says Jerry Hough, director of the East-West Trade Center at Duke University, "it's going to make Yugoslavia look like a picnic."

"We're seeing at every level people who want self-determination and independence for themselves, but they don't want to give self-determination and independence to smaller groups within their own borders," Raymond Garthoff, former U.S. ambassador to Bulgaria, said in an interview.

Even while Lithuania was seeking the world's sympathy it squelched its own Polish minority, said Richard Hermann, political scientist at Ohio State University.

Hermann, a former member of Secretary of State James A. Baker III's policy planning staff, adds another dimension: He sees the autonomy bug leaping across borders, into Afghanistan, India, Pakistan and Iran, where sizeable minorities may also

decide that it is time to declare independence.

Still, said Hermann, from an American security viewpoint, "We're much safer and more secure even though the probability of smaller wars has gone up. The great powers would have no incentive to get involved. ... For us, it's a yawn."

In interviews, a number of Soviet experts applauded President Bush's hesitancy to encourage independence for the 15 republics of the old Soviet empire, except for the three Baltic states seized by the Soviets in a deal with the Nazis in 1940.

"We ought to try, if we can, to head off or at the very least not to encourage things that we are not going to be able to control in the final analysis," said Garthoff.

Some of Bush's advisers believe that a dissolution of the USSR has now become unstoppable, despite Mikhail Gorbachev's struggle to head it off by proposing a loose confeder-

ation in place of the centrally controlled realm he led before the Aug. 19 attempt to depose him.

In Kennebunkport, Maine, one administration official, speaking on a not-for-attribution basis, expressed fear that "a lot of these republics, if they become independent, will be immediate economic basket cases."

Pessimism is not universal. Frank Fukuyama, former director of policy planning at the State Department, said the chances "of at least certain of these republics working out amicable relations is quite good."

Still, an undertone of tension was evident even in this week's post-putsch meeting of the Soviet national legislature in Moscow.

Boris Yeltsin, the president of Russia, which commands half the land mass and half the population of the Soviet Union, served notice that an independent Russia would want Russian-dominated areas of the Ukraine and Kazakhstan.

Soviet assistance needed, official says

U.S. representative says \$1 billion in aid should come from weapons cut to promote stability

WASHINGTON (AP) - The chairman of the House Armed Services Committee on Wednesday proposed trimming \$1 billion from U.S. weapons programs to provide humanitarian aid to the Soviets.

"We do not want the first winter of freedom after 70 years of communism to be a disaster for the Soviet Union," said Rep. Les Aspin, D-Wis., referring to crop shortfalls and other economic disasters looming there.

And, more directly to American defense interests, the money would "promote stability and avert chaos" in a nation with 30,000 nuclear weapons, he said.

Aspin's proposal came as several other lawmakers, including House Majority Leader Richard Gephardt, D-Mo., said the United States needed to re-evaluate its budget priorities because of recent events in the Soviet Union.

Aspin said the breakup of the Soviet system, the worst-case scenario being a civil war, could spread nuclear weapons among several governments and perhaps weaken security surrounding the warheads.

Aspin said he would make his proposal to the House and Senate conference committee considering the \$292 billion Department of Defense budget. The cash would be put into a special fund administered by Presi-

dent Bush.

Setting aside \$1 billion for aid would result in less money for other programs, but Aspin said he didn't have specific cutbacks in mind.

The budget agreement between Congress and Bush prohibits transfer of money between domestic programs, foreign aid and defense. Aspin said he would argue he wasn't violating that rule.

"This is defense by different means

but defense nevertheless, so it should come out of the Pentagon budget," he said.

The budget pact might have to be changed later if the Soviet Union meets Western demands for further reforms and the United States enters a long-term economic aid program, he said.

Bob Hall, a Pentagon spokesman, said Secretary of Defense Dick Cheney would have no immediate comment on Aspin's proposal.