

Yeltsin proposes one-year leap to market economy

MOSCOW — Russian President Boris Yeltsin proposed Monday a painful one-year leap to a market economy for Russia and said the hardships consumers will suffer were better than the alternative of eternal poverty.

Yeltsin invited the other 11 Soviet republics to join his speedy reform plan, which would free state-controlled prices and privatize most businesses in Russia. But he also said Russia was prepared to act unilaterally.

He served notice that Russia would

form its own army and print its own currency if other regions' increasingly aggressive independence drives hurt the largest and richest Soviet republic.

Yeltsin's timetable for economic reform was the fastest and most aggressive proposed by any level of government in the Soviet Union, including Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev. Previous Kremlin plans to move to a market economy have fallen short because of half-hearted implementation or the refusal of the

entrenched Communist bureaucracy to cooperate.

Yeltsin's blunt acknowledgement that living standards will get worse before they improve was the most candid political admission of how tough it will be to dismantle seven decades of bureaucratic central planning.

"Today, in acute crisis conditions, it will be impossible to implement reforms painlessly," Yeltsin told the Russian Congress of People's Deputies, the republic's parliament.

"I call on all Russian citizens to understand that a transition to market prices, a difficult transition, a forced transition, is a necessary measure," Yeltsin said. "It will be worse for everybody for about six months."

After that, he predicted, "the stabilization of our economy will begin by autumn 1992 and the living standards of the people will gradually improve."

Yeltsin urged that lawmakers give him new executive powers to help him carry out the reforms and proposed he be given the additional title

of prime minister. The post has been vacant since Ivan Silayev resigned to run the national economy following the failed August coup.

The offer was a tacit acknowledgment that Yeltsin has been unable to end the infighting within his administration that has prevented it from carrying out real reform.

It also represented a throwback to previous heads of the Soviet Union who endowed themselves with more than one leadership post.

Women explain suicides

Kevorkian's lawyer releases videotape

SOUTHFIELD, Mich. — Two disabled women wept and laughed on the eve of their assisted suicides as they explained the suffering that brought them to Dr. Jack Kevorkian, a videotape released Monday showed.

"I thought about it for a long time, a long time. I have no qualms about my decision," Sherry Miller, 43, told Kevorkian in her parents' home in a tape released by Kevorkian's lawyer, Geoffrey Fieger.

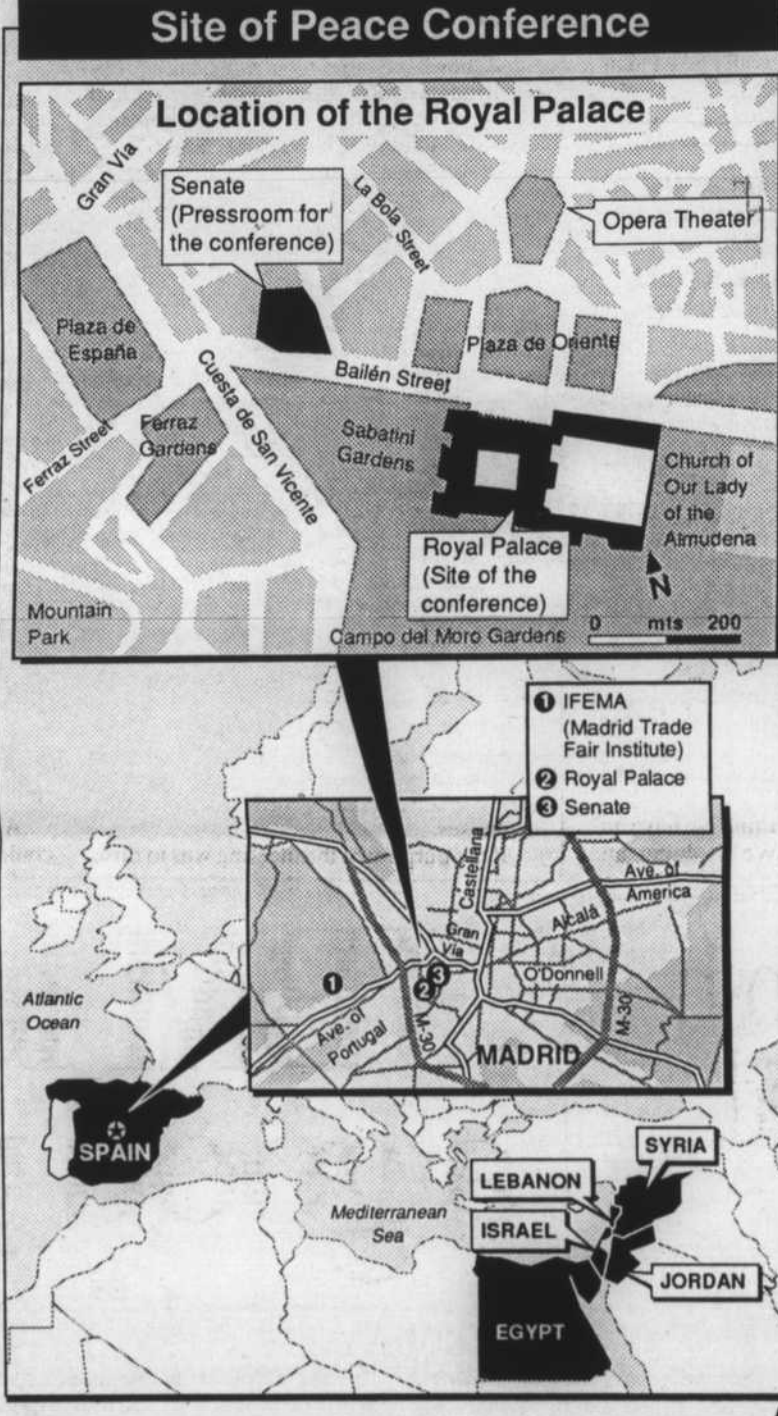
"I want to die and I know there's no turning back," she said, her voice faltering.

The videotape was recorded Oct. 22, the day before Miller, who had multiple sclerosis, and Marjorie Wantz joined Kevorkian in a secluded Oakland County cabin and killed themselves with devices he invented.

Kevorkian was expected to make his first public appearance Monday since the suicides. He didn't show at Fieger's Southfield office, but the attorney read a statement from Kevorkian in which the retired pathologist called for a national panel to explore doctor-assisted suicide and set guidelines.

Kevorkian, 63, would issue no other statements until the Oakland County prosecutor's office decides whether to charge him with a crime, Fieger said.

No charges have been brought against Kevorkian despite his apparent violation of a court order issued in January barring him from assisting suicide.



Violence erupts in Middle East on eve of talks

MADRID, Spain — In an outbreak of terrorist violence just two days ahead of Arab-Israeli peace talks, attackers firing automatic weapons killed two Jewish settlers Monday in the Israeli-occupied West Bank.

Hours earlier, two separate terrorist attacks in Turkey killed a U.S. soldier and wounded an Egyptian diplomat.

The West Bank attack appeared likely to harden Israeli opposition to the peace talks and put a sharp focus on Israel's oft-stated worries over security.

Israelis blamed the Palestinians and vowed revenge for the shootings, which also wounded six people, including five children.

"Whoever was looking for a proof that we have nobody to discuss peace with, that our enemies... want to continue to kill us and to destroy us... got the message tonight," Cabinet Minister Rehavam Zeevi told reporters at a rally in Tel Aviv. As word spread of the deaths, the crowd swelled to 50,000 people, some shouting "Death to the Arabs!"

Zalman Shoval, Israel's ambassador to Washington, said of the attack: "It certainly harms the atmosphere and it raises some very grave questions with regard to their genuine attitude toward this whole process."

Hanan Ashrawi, a spokeswoman for the Palestinian delegation, condemned the violence but explained it as the consequence of the "extreme violence" of the Israeli occupation.

"Unless we really work hard to remove causes of conflict and the



causes of violence, it's going to go on," she said in a television interview. Ashrawi also predicted more attempts to disrupt the talks.

There have been several Muslim fundamentalist calls for attacks to impede the conference that begins Wednesday in Madrid, Spain. A Lebanese newspaper reported Monday that a radical Iranian leader called for suicide attacks on the Jewish state and said the peace conference was "high treason."

Palestinian and Jordanian delegates arrived in Madrid to an enthusiastic greeting from a score of supporters. Young Palestinians and Spaniards waved placards saying in Arabic, Spanish and English: "Long Live a Free and Independent Palestine."

Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev arrived Monday night and President Bush arrives today, a day before the conference begins.

Bush said he hoped the talks would be a first step to peace, but cautioned that "there's a long, long way to go."

Consumer groups charge misuse of crash-test results

WASHINGTON — Consumer activists accused Transportation Secretary Samuel Skinner and other officials Monday of misusing vehicle crash test results in a campaign against tougher fuel-efficiency standards.

A Transportation Department spokesman denied the accusations of groups founded by Ralph Nader. They have feuded at length with the Bush administration and automakers over whether the government should order the industry to improve new cars' gasoline mileage.

Skinner and Jerry Curry, head of the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration,

spent \$200,000 on tests and an "illegal" lobbying campaign to scare people into believing that stronger mileage requirements would make highways more dangerous, said Joan Claybrook, president of Public Citizen.

"This is indeed a sordid tale, particularly for a government agency whose credibility depends on its scientific analysis of the facts," Claybrook said. She led the NHTSA in the Carter administration.

Agency spokesman Skipp Calvert said, "We categorically deny that these tests were staged for lobbying." He said the tests were among

those conducted routinely to determine whether new cars meet government standards for protecting occupants in collisions.

The dispute arose as the Senate prepares to debate a national energy package that would allow the agency to continue setting mileage standards.

Consumer and environmental groups support a bill sponsored by Sen. Richard Bryan, D-Nev., that would require each manufacturer to improve its new-car fleet's average mileage 40 percent within a decade. Under current regulations, each fleet must average 27.5 miles per

gallon.

Bryan is expected to offer his bill as an amendment to the energy package, which the Senate may begin debating later this week.

Automakers bitterly oppose the Bryan plan, contending that it would force them to manufacture only small cars or to make highly expensive design and material changes.

For several months, an industry-financed coalition has sponsored a television commercial showing footage from a government test in which a nearly 4,000-pound Ford Crown Victoria and a 2,000-pound Subaru Justy collide head-on.

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Student solves ancient chess puzzle

BALTIMORE — A 25-year-old graduate student solved an ancient chess puzzle by taking a computer to places no computer has gone before.

The double feat by Lewis Stiller, a computer scientist at Johns Hopkins University, not only settled an old chess conundrum. He opened the door for analysis once considered too complicated for even the fastest computers.

"It's very important. Sort of like discovering that there's a new element," said Hans Berliner, a computer scientist at Carnegie-Mellon University in Pittsburgh.

By performing one of the largest computer searches ever conducted, Stiller found that a king, a rook and a bishop can defeat a king and two knights in 223 moves, ending argument over whether the position is a draw.

Stiller, who works in Hopkins' artificial intelligence lab, made the search by writing a new program that tapped the power of a parallel computer at the Los Alamos National Laboratories in New Mexico.

The computer is actually thousands of processors working side by side on parts of a program. Unlike

most computers, the Los Alamos machine has 65,536 processors instead of one. That enables it to break a problem into many smaller problems and solve them simultaneously.

Stiller devised a way to avoid bogging down the computer with communications between the processors while it worked his 10,000-line program.

The computer solved the chess problem in five hours after considering 100 billion moves by retrograde analysis - working backward from a winning position.