

## Yeltsin gives Russian parliament ultimatum

MOSCOW — The Russian government gave increasingly isolated lawmakers five days to leave the parliament building or "face the consequences" Wednesday. Besieged hard-liners vowed to hold out.

The government kept up a tight cordon of razor-wire, guns and thousands of armed riot police and troops around the building. The hard-liners showed no signs of surrendering, and the government's ultimatum threatened to paint President Boris Yeltsin into a corner of his own.

The government didn't spell out what it meant by "serious consequences," but it will be expected to do something if the lawmakers continue to hold out past Monday. Foreign Minister Andrei V. Kozyrev offered fresh assurances Wednesday that force would not be used in the showdown, but Yeltsin may ultimately have no other option. For a second straight night, police with rubber batons clashed with hundreds of people who tried to demonstrate in support of parliament. Protesters threw bottles at police. One lawmaker was injured.

Also on Wednesday, elite paratroopers reinforced hundreds of police surrounding parliament Wednesday as authorities stepped up the pressure on hard-line lawmakers who have defied Yeltsin.

A senior police officer died of injuries Wednesday after he was pushed in front of a car by anti-Yeltsin protesters during a clash with police, the Interior Ministry said. Lt. Col. Vladimir Reshtuk was the third person to be killed in connection with the parliament crisis.

Riot police wielding shields and batons Wednesday chased away some 300 parliament supporters who had

### Standoff in Moscow

President Boris Yeltsin tried to break the nerve of defiant hard-line lawmakers on Wednesday, surrounding the Russian parliament with thousands of riot police and troops in his biggest show of force yet.



AP/Tom Holmes

been waiting peacefully outside police lines around the building. Police chased the crowd into a nearby train station.

Yeltsin has ruled out compromise since he dissolved the Soviet-era parliament a week ago. He ordered parliamentary elections for December to end a bitter power struggle with parliamentary hard-liners over his political and free-market reforms. He set presidential elections in June.

The deployment of police reinforcements around parliament increased the war of nerves on the increasingly demoralized and isolated lawmakers who have been holed up in the building, called the White House.

Earlier, police pushed back demonstrators who tried to break through to parliament. Protesters hurled rocks at police and beat on cars before being dispersed by hundreds of riot troops armed with shields and batons.

### Clinton supports Yeltsin

WASHINGTON — President Clinton Wednesday strongly endorsed Russian President Boris Yeltsin's handling of the showdown with rebels in the parliament building in Moscow. "I think so far they've done quite well," he said.

"I don't think that any of us should be here basically armchair quarterbacking the unfolding events," the president said.

"When I talked to Boris Yeltsin a few days ago, I told him very strongly that I hoped that he would be able to manage this transition in ways that really promoted democracy, respected human rights and kept the peace," he said. "And he said that would be exactly his policy. And so far he has done that under very, very difficult, intense circumstances."

Clinton made his remarks in an exchange with reporters before a late-afternoon meeting with Russian Foreign Minister Andrei Viktor Kozyrev.

Kozyrev, at the United Nations before traveling to Washington, said the showdown in Moscow would be resolved "without using force."

Clinton defended Yeltsin's decision to station troops around the parliament building.

Clinton said he did not have all the facts of what's happened. "But nothing has happened so far that has caused me to question the commitment that was made to me by the president and to his own people."

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