

Supreme Soviet

Leaders Brief Deputies on Minsk Accord

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[Robert Minasov report under general heading "Commonwealth of Independent States: The Beginning" entitled "A Necessary Measure"]

[Text] A 90-minute meeting took place between leaders of the Russian Government and Supreme Soviet and USSR people's deputies representing Russia in the Union parliament. The subject of the dialogue was clarification of the Russian leadership's position at the talks with Belarus and Ukraine in Belovezhskaya Pushcha 7-8 December and the agreement concluded there on the creation of a Commonwealth of Independent States.

The meeting was attended by G. Burbulis, first vice premier of the Russian Government; S. Filatov, first deputy chairman of the RSFSR Supreme Soviet; Yu. Voronin, deputy chairman of the RSFSR Supreme Soviet; S. Shakhrai, state counselor for legal questions; and N. Ryabov, chairman of the RSFSR Supreme Soviet of the Republic.

The meeting was opened by S. Filatov. He stated that the signing of the agreement by Belarus, Russia, and the Ukraine was a necessary, overdue measure, since the situation in the country and society is virtually unmanageable and the preparations for concluding a Union treaty were proceeding without inspiration or visible progress. He announced that ratification of the agreement was due to take place in the Supreme Soviets of Ukraine and Belarus 10 December, while the Russian parliament will examine the document at a joint plenary session 12 December.

As for the chances of ratification of the agreement in the RSFSR Supreme Soviet, Filatov noted that they are quite high, although there are some groups of deputies there who are seeking through ill-considered actions to torpedo the ratification and also, as in the Union parliament, are collecting signatures to convene an extraordinary Congress of RSFSR People's Deputies.

G. Burbulis gave those present a detailed account of the preparations for the meeting of the three states' leaders and the signing of the agreement.

Boris Yeltsin, Burbulis reported, informed the USSR president of the forthcoming talks in Minsk before he went. Therefore there can be no grounds for suspecting any kind of private moves.

We tried to rectify the basic articles of the draft Union treaty, the first vice premier noted. And we sought to remove the hypocritical formula about a confederative state.

All the speculations on the "Slav theme" which some of the mass media are dwelling on, have no foundation whatever.

I was rather surprised, Burbulis went on, by the USSR president's appeal, in his statement, for the convocation of an extraordinary Congress of USSR People's Deputies and a referendum. The Congress, which has in effect ceased to exist, does not reflect the interests of many voters, who are the ones who suffer most as a result of our unbearable life.