



The “Former” Soviet Bloc

Communism, we were told, collapsed throughout Eastern Europe and the old Soviet Union beginning in 1989. “Democracy,” we were told, was in the wind and “reform” was everywhere. Consider the former Soviet republic of Turkmenistan, where there have been two presidential elections, a parliamentary election, a national referendum, and where a former American secretary of state now advises President Saparmurad Niyazov, who led his country to independence in 1991. Encouraging indeed — until we learn the rest of the story.

Writing in the *Wall Street Journal* for April 11, 1995, staff reporter Claudia Rosett noted that President Niyazov has done away with the cult of Lenin. That is the good news. The bad is that he has replaced it with the cult of himself. Throughout the country statues of Niyazov “bedeck the streets, districts and collective farms now named after him. Mr. Niyazov’s profile, in bronze, adorns the central bank. His face appears on Turkmen bank notes, on billboards and in the design of hand-knotted rugs.” Further, Niyazov “has built an \$82 million marble-floored airport, named for himself,” which has “no toilet paper in the ... restrooms, no food in the restaurant and not much traffic on the airfield.”

President Niyazov orchestrated the creation of the Red-dominated Democrat Party of Turkmenistan, the country’s only legally registered party. To enhance his credentials as a “reformer,” he has reportedly urged Communist Party veterans to re-create the Turkmenistan Communist Party and a kindred Peasants’ Party. That way, he can boast of having a “multi-party” system and impress the West.

Regarding those presidential and parliamentary elections, Rosett recalls that in “October, 1990, he [Niyazov] ran unopposed to become Turkmenistan’s first president, winning 98.3% of the vote. In 1992, running again as the sole candidate, he won with a landslide 99.5%. In 1994, apparently tired of campaigning, Mr. Niyazov held a referendum that extended his term until 2002. He got 99.9% of the vote. In elections last December for a new 50-seat Parliament, 50 candidates approved by Mr. Niyazov all ran unopposed, and all won.” Isn’t democracy wonderful?

Rosett further reveals that Niyazov has retained the consulting services of former U.S. Secretary of State Alexander Haig Jr. (a longtime member of the ubiquitous Council on Foreign Relations), who for the past two years has come to Ashgabat (the capital) for Niyazov’s birthday (which is also national flag day). Haig has been helping Niyazov plan a pipeline that, Rosett states, “would run across Iran to Turkey and eventually on to Western Europe.” The U.S. government has objected to the scheme, because it “might leave Europe depending on a pipeline that could be controlled by Iran.”

Rosett writes that Niyazov “decides how land will be used and who may study abroad. He personally controls the dollar reserves of Turkmenistan’s central bank. Recently, strapped to pay bills for some of his large, unprofitable construction projects, he confiscated 75% of the 1994 profits of Turkmenistan’s commercial banks.”

It is all for the long-range good, however. “In his speeches,” according to Rosett, “Mr. Niyazov has explained that his iron grip is part of his ‘gradual’ plan ‘to build a democratic state.’”

So it goes in the former republics of what Ronald Reagan termed the “Evil Empire.” Perhaps the most remarkable aspect of this “collapse” of communism is the extent to which so many Americans have been persuaded to believe that leopards who long served the old Soviet and Iron Curtain regimes, and who continue to exercise decisive power within their respective nations today, have not only changed their spots, but have transformed into benign housecats. Let us look at additional examples that confirm the



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old adage that the more things change, the more they remain the same.

ALBANIA

In June of last year, Gannett News Service reported, “Five years after the Iron Curtain fell, ex-Communists are making a comeback in Central and Eastern European states and former Soviet republics.” Of the 22 states involved, Albania was described as one of only five to “have kept former ruling Communists from returning to power or from exercising major political influence.” To the contrary, President Sali Berisha, now often described as a fervent anti-Communist, belonged to the Communist Party prior to 1989. His government is praised as “democratically elected,” yet over 10 percent of the citizenry has fled the country since communism supposedly ended. The government continues to generate two-thirds of the country’s gross domestic product, and most prices remain controlled by the state-owned sector of the economy.

AZERBAIJAN

The Communists appeared to have suffered an authentic setback here in 1992 when President Ayaz Mutalibov, a Red since 1963 who had been elected in 1991 (he was the sole candidate), was forced out of office by an angry citizenry. Abulfaz Elchibiy was elected to replace him. A staunch nationalist, Elchibiy had a long record of opposition to the Communist Party and had been the nation’s leading dissident since the 1970s when he was imprisoned for two years at hard labor in a rock quarry for his anti-Communist activities. But in June 1993, Elchibiy’s government was toppled, and Azerbaijani lawmakers promptly elected their old Communist leader Geidar Aliyev as parliamentary chairman and designated him acting president. In a presidential election held on October 3, 1993, Aliyev received more than 98 percent of the vote. He is a former KGB general, was first secretary of the Azeri Communist Party, and was a member of the Soviet Politburo during the Brezhnev era.

BELARUS

The current Supreme Soviet (parliament), elected in 1989, is dominated by “former” Communists who continue to control the policy-making process. In June of last year, Aleksandr Lukashenko became the republic’s first elected president. While in high school, he served as secretary of a Young Communist League chapter, and in 1982 became deputy director of a collective farm. Three years later, he became secretary of that farm’s Communist Party committee.

BULGARIA

The Union of Democratic Forces, which helped oust the old communist government and won the 1991 parliamentary elections, held power for only 11 months, after which the country was run by (in the words of a December 18, 1994, *New York Times* dispatch) “former communists who provided the guiding hand in the government of the ‘non-party’ technocrats who ruled from December 1992 until September of this year.” In last December’s general election, the Socialist (former Communist) Party was returned to power, capturing an absolute majority in the 240-seat parliament. Socialist Party leader Zhan Videnov, whom Associated Press described the next day as “the new face of the Communists who used to rule this Balkan country,” became premier. He had assumed leadership of the “former” Communists in December 1991, and prior to that worked for the Young Communist League.

CZECH REPUBLIC

In January 1968, a so-called “liberal” faction within Czechoslovakia’s Communist Party, led by Alexander Dubcek, temporarily took control of the country. In his 1984 book *New Lies for Old*, former



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KGB agent Anatoliy Golitsyn claimed that it was a carefully-plotted trial run aimed at determining if the West would actually fall for the fantasy that a totalitarian communist country could spontaneously switch to “democracy” under the leadership of supposed “reformed” Communists and their collaborators. According to Golitsyn, the ploy had been planned in the late 1950s, prior to his defection to the West, and was brought to an end without exposing the supposed “democratization” when, after seven months, Warsaw Pact troops invaded, ousted Dubcek, and installed a Stalinist regime. Indications that something was fishy included the nonviolent nature of the invasion (Dubcek and his colleagues did not resist) and the fact that neither Dubcek nor his key advisers were executed nor given lengthy jail terms. To the contrary, Dubcek was given a plush job as a forestry manager in Bratislava.

Golitsyn predicted in 1984 that the time would come when, as part of a new phase of communist strategy, “liberalization in Eastern Europe would probably involve the return to power in Czechoslovakia of Dubcek and his associates.” On December 10, 1989, hard-line Communist President Gustav Husek resigned, and that same day Dubcek and playwright Vaclav Havel (leader of the left wing of the Civic Forum political movement) announced that they would both run to replace Husek. Havel had earlier said of Dubcek: “I will not permit any dark forces to drive a wedge between him and me.... He must be at my side, in whatever function.” Referring to Havel, Dubcek asserted: “We’ve been together from the very start.”

Within less than a week, Dubcek dropped out of the race and threw his support to Havel. That same day, during a nationally televised address, Havel declared: “For 20 years, it was official propaganda that I was an enemy of socialism, that I wanted to bring back capitalism, that I was in the service of imperialism.... All those were lies.” One week later the Communist Party endorsed Havel as interim president and Dubcek as parliamentary chairman. The Federal Assembly (parliament) unanimously elected Dubcek as speaker on December 28, 1989, and the next day elected Havel president. The fulfillment of Golitsyn’s prediction was complete.

On February 21, 1990, Havel addressed a joint session of the U.S. Congress, during which he urged our government to tangibly support political and economic “liberalization” in the Soviet Union and asserted that most important of all was the prospect that the world would enter “an era in which all of us ... will be able to create what your great President [Abraham] Lincoln called the ‘family of man’” (i.e., convergence). The day before, President Bush had hailed Havel as a man of “tremendous moral courage” and had moved to clear the way for Czechoslovakia to receive lucrative most favored nation trade status. Bush also pledged U.S. support for other Czechoslovakian access to aid from international financial organizations, and the Export-Import Bank subsequently announced that it would begin subsidizing U.S. exports to Czechoslovakia for the first time since 1946. In September 1990, Czechoslovakia was admitted to both the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund.

In July 1990, the Federal Assembly reelected Havel to a two-year term, whereupon he selected a cabinet that included “former” Communists as premier, foreign minister, economic planning minister, and defense minister.

Havel resigned in July 1992, once it became clear that the country would not continue as a federal state. In February 1993, parliament reelected him as the first president of the new Czech Republic (which had separated from Slovakia on January 1). According to the July 1994 issue of *Background Notes*, published by the U.S. State Department, “Full membership in the European Union, which the government hopes to achieve by the year 2000, is probably the country’s highest foreign policy goal.”

GEORGIA



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In 1991, Zviad Gamsakhurdia received nearly 87 percent of the vote to become the first directly elected leader of a Soviet republic. Eduard Shevardnadze, who would later become Soviet foreign minister under Mikhail Gorbachev, was the republic's Communist Party boss at the time. Shevardnadze had earned a reputation for ruthless brutality and had personally authorized the torture of prisoners in Georgian jails. The *Washington Post* for September 6, 1992 recalled, "In his 13 years as Communist Party chief [Shevardnadze] was regarded as an aggressive persecutor of nationalists and dissidents, including Gamsakhurdia." Writing in the *Washington Times* for August 8, 1985, Michael Bonafield cited underground documents that reached the West as early as 1975, indicating that Shevardnadze "personally authorized the torture of prisoners of Georgian jails." Bonafield described how Shevardnadze "set up the special No. 2 block of the prison, a slaughterhouse for 'target' prisoners and a place for the MVD [Ministry of Internal Affairs] hangman's orgies, where the most horrible tortures were used: beatings with iron bars, prodding with steel needles and rods, hanging up prisoners by the feet ... and so on."

Shevardnadze joined the Communist Party in 1948, graduated from the Party School of the Central Committee in 1951, and in 1956-57 became second, then first, secretary of the Communist Youth League. He was named a full member of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Georgia in 1958. From 1965 to 1972 he served as Georgia's interior minister, and in 1972 became the republic's Communist Party leader. He was appointed a non-voting member of the national Politburo in 1978, became a full voting member in 1985, and was then selected by Gorbachev to succeed Andrei Gromyko as foreign minister.

On December 20, 1990, Shevardnadze suddenly resigned as foreign minister, raising the specter of an "impending dictatorship" due to the increasing influence of "reactionary" forces opposed to perestroika.

Following the failed anti-Gorbachev "coup" in August 1991, President Gamsakhurdia was the only leader of a Soviet republic to openly voice the widely held suspicion that Gorbachev had himself faked the "coup" as part of long-range Marxist strategy. When the new Commonwealth of Independent States was formally launched in December, Georgia was the only republic that refused to join.

Soon, a clamor led by leftist intellectuals began demanding that he resign. When he refused, heavily-armed opposition forces moved against him in December 1991, and in early January he was forced to flee the capital of Tbilisi. During an interview with Associated Press on the day of Gamsakhurdia's departure, Eduard Shevardnadze hailed the military coup as a "democratic revolution," assailed Gamsakhurdia as a "dictator," and expressed "a great desire to participate in the creation of a democratic Georgia."

In October 1992, Shevardnadze was elected to the new post of parliament chairman, the equivalent of president. The election was carefully structured to assure his victory and create the semblance that it was a landslide. He ran unopposed and elections were not allowed in at least six districts considered strongholds of former President Gamsakhurdia. Shevardnadze received 90 percent of the vote, after which he told reporters: "Our people have finally chosen the democratic path." What he meant by "democracy" became clear on August 6, 1993, when he told Parliament: "My word should be law for everybody." According to the Autumn 1994 issue of *International Currency Review*, he has "ruled Georgia with terror and brutality ever since ... with the help of special troops or 'bodyguards' trained in secret by U.S. special forces seconded to Georgia for the purpose."

HUNGARY



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According to the State Department publication *Background Notes* for December 1994, "Hungary's transition to a Western-style parliamentary democracy was the first and the smoothest among the former Soviet bloc." The country's hard-line Communists were supposedly voted into near oblivion in 1990 when the Socialist Party (formerly the Communist Party) finished a dismal third in parliamentary elections, capturing only 33 seats in the 386-seat national assembly. The victor on that occasion was the Hungarian Democratic Forum (HDF), which had been the first opposition party to emerge during Hungary's supposed "liberalization." Yet, as United Press International reported on December 13, 1989, the HDF itself was receiving "support from the highest levels" of the Communist Party Politburo.

With leftists posing as free market "reformers" in control, the economy deteriorated, which paved the way for the return of overt Communists who hammer-and-sickled the theme that "democratic reform" had failed. On May 29 of last year, the Communists were returned to power when the Socialist Party secured an absolute parliamentary majority. The Party then selected its leader, Gyula Horn, as premier. Horn, who was the last Communist foreign minister before the "collapse of Communism," had been described in a May 7, 1994 *New York Times* pre-election dispatch as "one of Hungary's most unpopular politicians." The electorate's distaste for Horn was understandable. As the *Times* reported two days later, Horn "did not run as the prime ministerial candidate of the Socialists, apparently because his background as a member of a Communist Party militia that helped suppress the 1956 uprising provided too much of a campaign target for his opponents." The *Times* nevertheless claimed that Horn "is considered to come from the reform wing of the party."

KAZAKHSTAN

Here, too, it is essentially business as usual, with "former" Communists firmly in control. President Nursultan A. Nazarbayev, the country's top communist official prior to independence, was a Gorbachev ally (and Politburo member) who joined the Communist Party in 1962 and only resigned from its Central Committee in the wake of the contrived 1991 anti-Gorbachev "coup." He was elected to the presidency after the breakup of the Soviet Union. He was the only candidate for a term set to expire in December 1996, but on March 11 of this year he dissolved parliament and asserted that he would rule by decree until new elections were held. On April 30, he received more than 95 percent support in a referendum to extend his term until the year 2000.

Some critics claimed that the extension amounted to a return to dictatorship, but Nazarbayev insisted that it was needed to provide stability. The West, including the U.S., reacted with typical limp-wristed indignation. As reported by *Facts on File* for May 4, 1995, "Representatives of the Group of Seven major industrialized nations boycotted the announcement of the results of the vote." Anything harsher was out of the question. After all, as the March 30 *Facts on File* had reported, Nazarbayev "supported aggressive economic reform."

KYRGYZSTAN

When President Askar Akayev was elected in 1991, he was lauded as the "first freely elected" president of the republic. In fact, he was the only candidate and received some 95 percent of the vote. Coincidentally, 95 was also the percentage of deputies elected to parliament who were members of the Kyrgyz Communist Party, which Akayev himself had joined in 1981.

In 1986, President Akayev was beckoned to Moscow to serve in the Soviet Communist Party Central Committee (CPSUCC) Department on Science and Education. In 1987, he was elected vice president of the Kyrgyz Academy of Sciences, and later became its president. In 1989, he was elected to the newly



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created Soviet Congress of People's Deputies and was subsequently selected to serve in the Supreme Soviet. In 1990, he became a full member of the CPSUCC.

In the wake of increasing opposition to his policies, Akayev scheduled a referendum for January of last year on whether he should complete his term. More than 96 percent of the voters opted to keep him in office so that he could continue his "reform" efforts. In July, he proposed that press freedom be limited in order to halt the "impunity and immorality" of "anti-democratic" newspapers that were criticizing him. In testimony in October 1993 and May 1994, U.S. Deputy Secretary of State Strobe Talbott declared that due to "the political enlightenment of its president and also the boldness of their economic reforms, we're going to do what we can ... [to] elevate the political profile of our relationship." He described Akayev as "a true Jeffersonian democrat."

LATVIA

Latvia is one of the former Soviet republics which Gannett News Service claimed in June of last year had "kept former ruling Communists from returning to power or from exercising major political influence." Yet Anatolijs Gorbunovs, chairman of the Supreme Council (parliament), is a former member of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union and was Latvian Communist Party secretary for ideology.

LITHUANIA

In March 1990, Vytautas Landsbergis, who had an impressive career-long record of opposition to Communism, became the first non-Communist to head one of the Soviet republics when he was elected president by Lithuania's national parliament. He defeated Communist Party chief Algirdas Brazauskas by a margin of more than two-to-one. President Brazauskas had been trained as an engineer and worked in construction before becoming a state economic planner in 1966. In 1977 he was appointed secretary of the Lithuanian Communist Party in charge of economic affairs, and in 1988 became Party boss. In 1990, he and a group of fellow Communists supposedly broke with the Soviets and formed the Democrat Labor Party (DLP) to succeed the Communist Party.

In 1992, Lithuania became the first of a growing list of former Soviet republics or satellites to formally return reins of power to the old-timers when the DLP captured a solid majority of seats in parliament. The new parliament elected Brazauskas its chairman and acting head of state and, the following February, Brazauskas received 60 percent of the vote to become the country's first directly elected president.

MOLDOVA

President Mircea Snegur was elected on December 8, 1991. The sole candidate, he mustered 98 percent of the vote. As summarized in an August 12, 1994 *CRS Report for Congress*, he "held various top Communist Party and government positions before Moldovan independence in 1991, including president of the Moldavian Supreme Soviet, deputy chairman of the USSR Supreme Soviet, and secretary of the Moldavian Communist Party Central Committee."

Moldova's first parliamentary elections in February 1993 saw the Agrarian Democratic Party (ADP), led by Snegur and other "former" Communists, finish far ahead of their rivals. Petru Lucinschi of the ADP was subsequently elected parliamentary speaker. He was once a member of both the Central Committee of the Soviet Communist Party and the Politburo, and was a first secretary of the Moldavian Communist Party. Premier Andrei Sangheli also has a long record of service to the Communist cause.

**POLAND**

Poland was the first Eastern European country to supposedly throw off the yoke of Soviet domination. The Solidarity labor movement, which thrust “anti-Communist dissident” and current President Lech Walesa into the public spotlight, was launched in 1980 after months of nationwide strikes. Founding members of the movement included authentic anti-Communists, Communists, and collaborators with communism. According to then-Hungarian Communist Party First Secretary Stanislaw Kania, there were about one million Communist Party members in Solidarity, including 42 of the 200 members of the Party’s 1981 Central Committee.

In *New Lies for Old*, Anatoliy Golitsyn charged that Solidarity was “suppressed” in 1981 (though not completely) as a maneuver to convince the West that it was an authentic opponent of the hard-line regime headed by Prime Minister Wojciech Jaruzelski. Golitsyn predicted (in 1984) that eventually “it may be expected that a coalition government will be formed [it was], comprising representatives of the communist party [there were many], of a revived Solidarity movement [after it was re-legalized], and of the church. A few so-called liberals might also be included [some were].”

During a series of “round table” negotiations between Solidarity and the ruling communist government in March 1989, an agreement was reached on major political reform. Early in the negotiations, Walesa agreed to let the Communists have 65 percent of the Sejm (lower house of parliament) seats in the new government. With Walesa’s blessing, Jaruzelski, his supposed tormenter of less than a decade earlier, was elected president by parliament. Jaruzelski bowed out after Walesa was elected to succeed him in December 1990.

While negotiations for the new system were progressing in 1989, the March 2, 1989 issue of the Soviet current affairs weekly *New Times* printed an interview with Walesa in which he acknowledged that he was not seeking to take power away from the Communists. “Let power remain in the hands of the Communists,” he said, “but let it be different. Let it serve the people better, respect the law and be accountable to society. We are prepared to cooperate constructively with such authorities.”

In the country’s first parliamentary elections under the new system, more than 29 parties gained representation in the Sejm. The “former” Communists of the Democratic Left Alliance, and their Peasant Party allies, captured a mere 93 seats in the 460-seat Sejm. But in September 1993, the Communists were voted back into power when the two Red-dominated parties secured a two-thirds majority in the Sejm, sufficient to override presidential vetoes and perhaps draft a new constitution amenable to their own interests.

Poland’s current prime minister, Jozef Oleksy, was previously speaker of the Red-controlled Sejm. He once belonged to the Central Committee of the Polish Communist Party. He replaced Waldemar Pawlak, who resigned as prime minister after losing a no-confidence vote in parliament on March 1 of this year. Pawlak, too, was a “former” Communist.

On August 12, 1994, Minister of Internal Affairs Adrzej Milczanowski, who was brought into government service by Walesa, appointed Marian Zacharski as chief of Poland’s civil intelligence agency. Zacharski was forced to step down only five days later in the wake of a vigorous protest by the United States. Years earlier, Zacharski had been sentenced to life in prison in the U.S. for stealing military secrets for the Soviet Bloc. He was freed in 1985 as part of a Cold War spy swap. President Walesa praised Zacharski’s “professionalism and many years of experience,” but nevertheless called for his resignation because the nomination would make “Poland’s process of integration with the West



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more difficult." The *Washington Post* reported on September 3, 1994 that "Zacharski will remain in a prominent position in the intelligence section of the Office of State Security, Poland's civilian secret service."

The *Post* also reminded its readers that Walesa's regime had "allowed and even encouraged Communists to remain in important police and security posts." For instance, "the deputy minister in charge of intelligence in the ministry and the director of the Office of State Security are former communist operatives. Zacharski's appointment was just another move in that direction. The man he was supposed to replace, Janusz Luks, himself a senior intelligence officer during the Communist era, is reported to have been assigned to the Polish Embassy in Washington."

Still, much of the establishment media continues to portray Lech Walesa as "a staunch anti-Communist," a description employed, for example, by the Associated Press in a recent dispatch.

ROMANIA

Despite early attempts to hide the fact, the Communists have ruled Romania without interruption since December 1989, when Communist dictator Nicolai Ceausescu was assassinated. The National Salvation Front (NSF), led by former senior officials of the Ceausescu regime, became the provisional government. Ion Iliescu, a "former" Communist Party official, was named president, a post he still holds today. Sham elections were held in May 1991 in which the NSF attained two-thirds of the seats in both houses of parliament, while Iliescu received 85 percent of the presidential vote. He was reelected in 1992.

Though Romania has not been free of the heavy hand of communism, and has never had a chance to try authentic free market economic alternatives to socialism, some Western media have blamed its present sorry plight on the failure of "democracy" and "the free market" since the overthrow of Ceausescu. Consider, for instance, a remarkable December 21, 1994 Associated Press dispatch which claimed, "A hungry country sees little difference between democracy and Communist dictatorship," and stated that Romania's "traditionally backward economy has slipped further in the free market." Truly, the mind boggles!

RUSSIAN FEDERATION

Boris Yeltsin's authoritarian Red stripes have, in recent months, become increasingly visible to all but the willfully blind. On August 18, 1995, for instance, the AP noted the jitters being generated by the Russian president's close and friendly ties to an increasingly powerful secret police apparatus. According to the AP, the Federal Security Service, as the former KGB is now known after six name changes since 1991, "is alive, well and making a comeback under the protection of none other than Boris Yeltsin. Last month, Yeltsin promoted the chief of the Kremlin guards, a close friend, to head the Federal Security Service, his latest move to tighten his grip on the old KGB."

That "close friend," Colonel-General Mikhail Barsukov, was a KGB agent during the Soviet era. The AP dispatch continued to note, "Many Russians, including opposition politicians, businessmen, bankers, former dissidents — even some of Yeltsin's top advisers — are jittery about the president's growing ties to the secret police." *

The head of Yeltsin's personal security service, General Aleksandr Korzhakov, is another longtime steward of the police state. Korzhakov, who has been with Yeltsin since 1985, joined the KGB in 1970. His influence with Yeltsin is said to be enormous. "To this day," Yeltsin wrote in his recently published autobiography *The Struggle for Russia*, "he never leaves my side, and we even sit up at night during



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trips together.” He describes Korzhakov as his closest companion of the last ten years.

On December 2 of last year, Korzhakov had the presidential security service launch a raid, which has yet to be explained, on the offices of Vladimir Gusinsky, Russia’s leading banker. Gusinsky is allied with Moscow Mayor Yuri Luzhkov, a potential rival to Yeltsin in next year’s presidential elections. Soon after the raid, Luzhkov denied he had any desire to run for president, and Gusinsky has not surfaced in Russia since early January, when he moved his family to London. *Washington Post* correspondent Margaret Shapiro observes that such incidents, among others, “have sparked worries here among pro-reform democrats that Russia could be heading back toward a police state.”

Korzhakov has participated in cabinet-level meetings between Yeltsin and his ministers, was a member of the Russian delegation to the December meeting of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, and is said to have been responsible for the appointment last November of Vladimir Polevanov as the country’s new privatization chief. Polevanov has called for a larger government role in industry and a reduction of private involvement. He has suggested that companies sold by the state be re-nationalized and favors policies that will limit the “damage” done by privatization.

Earlier this year, Yeltsin signed into law legislation renaming, reorganizing, and strengthening the intelligence services. As summarized in an editor’s note in Anatoliy Golitsyn’s new book *The Perestroika Deception*, “The Federal Security Service was ‘empowered’ to search homes without warrants, to run its own jails and independent ‘criminal’ investigations, to operate under cover of other official agencies, to bug telephones and intercept mail (with ‘court permission’), and to operate abroad.” London’s *Sunday Times* for April 9 quoted Sergei Karaganov, deputy director of the Institute of Europe of the Academy of Sciences and an adviser to President Yeltsin, as stating that “Russia is moving toward a mixed democratic, semi-authoritarian model, with the strengthening elements of a police state.”

In June 1994, under the guise of fighting organized crime, Yeltsin signed a decree empowering the regular police to hold suspects for up to 30 days without charge, permit police searches of property and examination of financial records without a warrant or evidence of a crime, and allow certain crime-ridden cities and districts to be placed under “special control.”

Even as American taxpayers are bilked to bankroll what is said to be the Yeltsin regime’s commitment to “reform,” old-time Communists are leading Russia’s prosperity parade. For instance, all of the plotters of the apparently contrived 1991 “coup” against then-President Mikhail Gorbachev, and the similarly suspicious parliamentary revolt against Yeltsin in 1993, have been freed. As just one example of how they are doing, consider the plight of former Prime Minister Valentin Pavlov, who helped instigate the 1991 “coup.” The *Washington Post* for September 22, 1994, reported that Pavlov is now a prosperous banker living in a \$500,000 home and taking home about \$60,000 after taxes (the average Russian’s annual wage is around \$1,200). According to the *Post*, many others “have made transitions similar to Pavlov’s, including others involved in the anti-Gorbachev coup. Indeed, among the leading businessmen of Russia today are many top Soviet-era bureaucrats and party members. One recent analysis found that nearly two-thirds of Russia’s new rich had converted prominent positions under the old regime into their present lucrative niches.”

In September of last year, researchers at the Russian Academy of Sciences released a study that found that more than 60 percent of the 580 richest persons in the country were former members of the Soviet Union’s communist elite. In the area of banking, for instance:

- Sergie Rodionov, chairman of one of Russia’s largest commercial banks, headed the banking



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department at the Soviet Finance Ministry.

- Sergei Yegorov, chairman of the Commercial Banks Association, was once chairman of the Soviet State Bank and head of the financial department of the Communist Party Central Committee.
- Nikolai Ryzhkov, chairman of the Tveruniversal Bank, was a former Soviet prime minister in the 1980s.

Such are the folks with whom Western entrepreneurs are being encouraged to do business. As Anatoliy Golitsyn advises in a postscript to *The Perestroika Deception*: “Western industrialists and financiers should reverse their mistaken involvement in joint ventures with the Communists, thereby financing the revival of their main political adversaries, supplying them ill-advisedly with new technology, and wasting time and money on operations that will ultimately be taxed to death, confiscated, or both.”

And make no mistake about it, the possibility of expropriation exists in virtually all of the “former” communist countries, including those deemed most “reformed,” and crackdowns of a Tiananmen Square type are not out of the question in some instances. The *New York Times* for July 3, 1995 quoted an unidentified Western ambassador as saying that there are already “many cases of Russian joint venture partners turning on their Western partners and trying to seize the businesses” and that “these cases involve officials of the Government.” And Peter Charow, executive director of the American Chamber of Commerce in Moscow, told the *Times*, “A lot of Government agencies have been taken off the state budget and must find ways to support themselves. Foreign companies are often seen as ready prey.”

As noted earlier, the law that established and empowered the Federal Security Service authorized the FSS to run its own prisons. The gulag mentality is not only surviving, but thriving. Last fall, William Cohen of the Colorado-based Center for Human Rights Advocacy led a group of U.S. and European legal experts who visited Russia to examine the country’s criminal justice system. A dispatch filed in mid-October by Scripps Howard News Service reporter Holger Jensen summarized their findings. Among other things, “the legal system is still largely controlled by Communist-era bureaucrats,” with the most serious human rights violations taking place in Russian jails, where “suspects are held for months, sometimes years, under barbaric conditions before they go to trial.”

Russian procurators (as prosecutors are called) usually assume that anyone arrested is guilty. Jensen reported that they “will go to any lengths to obtain a confession. So conditions in the pretrial detention centers are deliberately made worse than they are in the prisons and labor camps where convicted felons are sent after their trials.” Suspects “are routinely starved, beaten and deprived of contact with their families,” and some “confess to crimes they didn’t commit just to get out of the awful detention centers.”

In its annual assessment of human rights around the globe, released in February, the State Department noted that thousands of Russians have been illegally arrested, and that prisons often stop feeding inmates for months at a time, relying instead on relatives to provide food. Also, a jury system has yet to be introduced in 80 regions of the country. Confirming the findings of the Cohen team, the State Department report found that suspects are routinely denied access to attorneys, and are beaten into confessing by procurators who win rewards for closing cases promptly.

SLOVAKIA

Premier Vladimir Meciar is a “former” Communist whose party finished first (garnering about one-third of the vote) in the 1992 elections. Writing in the November/December 1994 issue of *Foreign Affairs*



Written by [Alias](#) on September 18, 1995

(flagship publication of the CFR), Anne Applebaum, deputy editor of *The Spectator*, described Meciar as “a Moscow-trained apparatchik.” In March of last year, Meciar was removed from office following a no-confidence vote in parliament, but was returned to the post after his party won Slovakia’s first national elections later in the year. *Facts on File* for October 6, 1994 reported that Meciar “was fiercely opposed to Western-style economic reform, foreign investment and the privatization of state enterprises.”

In March 1992, the defense and security committee of what was then Czechoslovakia’s Slovak republic issued a report, which parliament accepted, accusing Meciar of collaborating with the StB (the former secret police) during the pre-independence era. According to *Facts on File* for April 2, 1992, the “report contended that Meciar had worked for the StB under the code name ‘Doctor’ and that he had promoted former StB loyalists while interior minister [of the Slovak republic], and that he had used information in the StB files against his political enemies.”

TAJIKISTAN

From 1991 until he was forced from office in September 1992, Tajikistan’s president was Rakhman Nabiyev, a former Communist Party first secretary. In November of that year, the current president, Imamali Rakhmonov (a Nabiyev supporter), became acting president. As noted by *Facts on File* for April 17, 1995, the government continues to be “led by former communists.”

UKRAINE

From December 1991 until July of last year the second most populous of the former Soviet republics was ruled by its first directly elected president, Leonid M. Kravchuk. He was the country’s former Communist Party chief for ideology. Kravchuk kept the government, industry, and agriculture in the hands of his fellow communist apparatchiks. In the July 1994 election he was defeated by current President Leonid D. Kuchma, who was once director of the Soviet Union’s largest missile factory.

In October, Kuchma announced a program of economic reforms which, mimicking Lenin, he called his “new economic policy.” It was publicized in the West as evidence that he was a true-blue reformer deserving of massive infusions of Western aid and the support of Western businessmen. Kuchma has claimed, “Without international aid, we will fall like a house of cards.” The aid was quick in coming, and not merely from the international lending institutions to which the United States contributes heavily. On November 22, 1994, the *Washington Times* reported that “President Clinton today will make Ukraine the fourth-largest recipient of U.S. foreign aid when he raises taxpayers’ donations to \$900 million, including a \$30-million-to-\$50-million program to build free houses for former Red Army soldiers.” During a briefing for reporters on November 21, according to the *Times*, “a senior administration official explained that the U.S.-Ukrainian relationship under Mr. Clinton was rocky at first but has been bolstered by the July election of Mr. Kuchma, a reformer.”

The Ukrainian prime minister, Vitaly Masol, was the Soviet Union’s top economic manager.

UZBEKISTAN

President Islam A. Karimov was elected president in 1991, receiving 86 percent of the vote after severely curtailing the activities of all opposition parties. He had opposed his country’s break with the Soviet Union, claiming that Uzbekistan was not ready for either “democracy” or a market economy.

As in Turkmenistan and Kazakhstan, a referendum was arranged to provide a lop-sided endorsement of an extension of Karimov’s presidential term. An April 29, 1995 Associated Press dispatch noted that the “lop-sided figures in those referendums were reminiscent of the turnouts reported in Soviet-era one-



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party votes.”

On December 25, 1994, in the country’s first parliamentary elections since the apparent demise of the Soviet Union, the Democratic Party (former Communist Party) captured more than 70 percent of the seats. As noted by *Facts on File* for February 9, 1995: “Foreign observers said Karimov had allowed the election because he wanted to at least claim that Uzbekistan had a multiparty democracy.”

* * *

If the same standard by which “reformed” Communists and their collaborators have been judged in recent years had been in effect at the end of World War II, Adolf Hitler, Benito Mussolini, Hideki Tojo, and their henchmen could have survived and prospered by simply tearing insignia from their uniforms and pledging their devotion to a new world order predicated on “reform,” “democracy,” and “convergence” with the Allied nations.

It would have been foolish to fall for such preposterous claims by supposedly repentant “former” fascists. Why, then, believe such bogus claims when they emanate from self-professed “former” Communists?

* In December 1993, Yeltsin announced with great fanfare that he was scrapping the hated KGB. “The Ministry of Security, the body which conducted political surveillance of people for nearly 75 years, has been abolished as a whole,” he declared. His decree was widely publicized, and undoubtedly served to further convince many Americans that he was truly committed to the sort of meaningful reforms that could justify further infusions of U.S. foreign aid and other assistance. Less publicized was his action one day earlier in promoting 27 senior Security Ministry officers to the rank of general.



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