

The Daily Tar Heel

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IN DEPTH

Gorbachev seeks stronger office

By GLENN O'NEAL
Staff Writer

Mikhail Gorbachev, Supreme Soviet chairman, has initiated a move within the Soviet government to create a stronger Soviet presidency in an effort to appease ethnic minorities and to consolidate power in the government.

The Associated Press reported that the Supreme Soviet voted 374-27 at the beginning of the week to preliminary approval of a bill that would create a presidency with a five-year term, replacing the position of Supreme Soviet chairman.

The bill is subject to final approval by the Congress of People's Deputies, which meets on March 12 and 13, said Boris Malakhov, press spokesman for the Soviet Embassy in Washington D.C.

Yuri Kirilchenko, reporter for the Soviet news agency Tass, said Wednesday the bill provides for a vast scope of power to be given to the new president.

"The power provides a more effective means of governing the country," he said.

The powers of the proposed presidency include: the power to veto legislation; the power to declare war and states of emergency; and the power to dissolve the Soviet Parliament, Kirilchenko said.

Analysis

encko said. The Associated Press reported that the president would also appoint a prime minister.

The election of the president would not be by general election at first, Kirilchenko said, but the process of a general election will be worked out eventually. "It is a little bit premature to draw any suggestions on what it (the bill) will eventually lead to," he said.

Kirilchenko said the post was not created for Gorbachev, but added that the Soviet leader is most likely to assume the position.

Robert Rupen, political science professor at UNC-CH, said Wednesday the move for a presidency was part of the shift within the Soviet Union from an one-party monopoly system to a system allowing more participation by many different groups.

Rupen predicted that many changes will follow the strengthening of the presidency. In the future, elections in the Soviet Union will offer people true alternatives, he said.

Joel Schwartz, political science professor at UNC-CH, said Thursday the creation of a stronger Soviet presidency is in response to the breaking apart of the Communist Party across Eastern Europe.

A smart politician will create an alternative source of power when the Communist Party loses power, Schwartz said. Schwartz used the events in Lithuania as an example of the changing nature of the Communist Party. The Communist Party in Lithuania separated itself from the Soviet Communist Party in an attempt to prove itself as the defender of Lithuanian independence, he said.

The independent Communist party lost terribly in the election, Schwartz said. Popular Front, a non-Communist party, won 80 percent of the government offices in Lithuania. "The point is, the leopard cannot change its spots fast enough to make perceptual differences to the electorate."

Josef Anderle, history professor at UNC-CH, said there were two motivations behind Gorbachev's proposal of a stronger presidency. The Soviet leader is concerned about the fact of perestroika not doing that well economically. The present government is not strong enough to push through the reforms, he said.

Also, the Communist Party cannot play a role in appeasing nationalistic movements in the Soviet Union, movements such as in the Baltic area and in central Asia, he said. A strong government might be able to appease these movements, he said.

Schwartz said the powers of the new presidency were too extensive. The Soviet Union does not presently have the political traditions to constrain powerful leaders in times other than war, Schwartz said. Currently, Gorbachev's domestic power is dependent upon his international status, he said.

The concern is what will happen after Gorbachev, he added.

Gorbachev does not have the support of the majority of the Communist Party, Schwartz said. Gorbachev faces opposition from party members who make up the large Soviet bureaucracy, an institution he is trying to diminish, he said.

Anderle said the members of the bureaucracy did not want to lose the privileges their position provides: a good salary, power and a high position in society.

The people might find a strong president desirable because past regimes that featured strong leaders were oppressive, but they also were efficient in maintaining the national economy, he said.

Rupen said Gorbachev faced trouble from the people themselves, mainly because of economic problems in the country. "If they demonstrate, they will demonstrate for food," he said.

Baltic states push for autonomy

From Associated Press reports

MOSCOW—Lithuanians are speeding up the election of their new parliament so it can vote for independence before March 12, when Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev is expected to get what one activist on Thursday called "dictatorial" powers.

In the neighboring Baltic republic of Latvia, the parliament chose a collision course with Moscow on Thursday when it gave youths the right to refuse conscription in the Soviet army.

In Moldova, another of the increasingly restive Soviet republics, Communist leaders admitted their party's past mistakes and agreed to talks with popular political movements, Tass said.

Already, 22 local election boards in Lithuania have moved up the runoff election from March 10 to March 4, the official news agency Tass reported. Others are expected to follow, said

Vitoris Radjavichus, a spokesman for the Lithuanian people's front, Sajudis.

That will allow the new Lithuanian parliament to meet — and possibly vote on independence — before March 12, Radjavichus said.

March 12 is the opening day of the Soviet Congress of People's Deputies, which is scheduled to vote on creating a powerful presidency, expected to be occupied by Gorbachev.

The bill would give Gorbachev the power to declare a state of emergency and suspend a republic's parliament on his own. He could also send troops into a locality and declare war without asking the Soviet parliament. Radjavichus described the powers as "dictatorial." Progressives strongly object to the bill. "All decisions can be crossed out by the president," said parliamentarian Anatoly Sobchak in debate Tuesday.

Candidates backed by Sajudis, which

favors independence, won 70 of 90 seats filled in the first round of the election Feb. 24. However, 94 of the parliament's 140 seats, or a two-thirds majority, must be filled before the body can begin to act, Sajudis secretary Andrius Kubilyus told the Radio Moscow news service Interfax.

Kazimieras Motieka, a Sajudis leader and member of the national parliament, appealed on Lithuanian TV for the republic's new legislature to take office by March 10 or 11, Tass said.

In the December session of Congress, Motieka asked Kremlin leaders to begin negotiations on their demand for independence from the Soviet Union, which forcibly annexed Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia in 1940.

Tass quoted Gorbachev as saying the "first moves" toward a solution became apparent during the emotional debate.

Campus Calendar

FRIDAY

Noon: CGLA will sponsor a Lesbian Lunch in the Union auditorium lobby.

1 p.m.: African Student Association and Black Cultural Center present a panel discussion, "South Africa and the Political Question," in 309 Gardner until 2 p.m.

4 p.m.: The Institute for Research in Social Science presents a UNC-CH "Cultures on the Margin: Race, Class, Gender and Religion" symposium "The Trail to Zuni Heaven" with Richard Hart of the Institute of the North American West, in Donovan

Lounge of Greenlaw. Call 962-0772 for more info.

7:30 p.m.: Baha'i Club presents "How to Ruin a Good Thing: Backbiting and Gossip," an informal discussion in the Black Cultural Center. All are welcome!

SATURDAY

8:30 a.m.: Zeta Tau Alpha's first annual Franklin Five, a five-kilometer race to benefit the Association of Retarded Citizens. Registration is at 8:30 a.m.; race time is 10 a.m. at the Bell Tower. Post-race party at Granville Towers with WRDU broadcasting live. For information call ZTA: 942-4116.

9:30 a.m.: AIESEC will be hosting the World Game until 12:30 p.m. The game deals with working together to solve world problems. All are invited to participate in this activity that takes place on a floor map in Fetzter Gym B. Cost is \$5.

Noon: Campus Y Project Literacy presents Senator Paul Simon, who will deliver the keynote address for Literacy Awareness Week in Hanes Art Center Auditorium.

5 p.m.: Wesley Foundation invites you to come to the Candlelight Spaghetti Dinner at the University United Methodist Church until 7:30 p.m. Tickets are \$4 at the door.

SUNDAY

8 p.m.: The Department of Music will present a concert of vocal solos and duets in Hill Hall Auditorium. Free and open to the public.

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