

Russia signs 16 military deals with Kazakhstan

RTw 1/26/96 9:54 AM

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ALMATY, Jan 26 (Reuter) - Russian Defence Minister Pavel Grachev wrapped up two days of talks on Friday in Kazakhstan by signing 16 military cooperation deals, and hailed deeper ties with the former Soviet republic on Russia's southern flank.

Grachev told a news conference that major progress had been made towards signing a bilateral joint defence agreement along the lines of existing pacts with Belarus and Ukraine.

"We have made a big push forward," he told reporters.

Grachev ruled out creating joint defence forces for the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) and said that the main priority for Russia was to build bilateral military ties.

Among the 16 deals were agreements on providing five ships for Kazakhstan to patrol its territorial waters in the Caspian Sea. Russia will offer officer training for the Kazakh forces, depleted of elite personnel after the Soviet Union collapsed.

The two sides also agreed to continue an existing agreement for Russia to use the Baikonur cosmodrome for space launches.

REUTER

New Kazakh parliament to convene on Jan 30

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ALMATY, Jan 24 (Reuter) - Kazakhstan's new two-chamber parliament was ready to begin work on January 30 after President Nursultan Nazarbayev on Wednesday picked a group of senators to join a legislature seen as likely to rubber-stamp his policies.

Parliament reconvenes with weakened powers after a 10-month hiatus following the previous parliament's dissolution during which Nazarbayev held referendums to prolong his term to 2001 and tighten his grip on this oil-rich former Soviet republic.

Elections in December to the Mazhilis (lower house) have returned 66 deputies, with one seat still to be filled, while 45 out of 47 senators have been elected or nominated.

Of seven directly nominated senators, former National Bank chairman Daulet Sembayev is tipped to be chosen by Nazarbayev at the opening session to become upper house speaker.

"I think the new parliament will work productively," he said, refusing to be drawn on whether he would be appointed.

The previous parliament, whose election in March 1994 was annulled a year later, passed just seven laws. Nazarbayev has fired off dozens of decrees during his spell of direct rule to give new impetus to market reforms.

Election Commission chairman Yuri Kim, presenting final poll results, said all six parties taking part in the polls -- five of which were pro-government -- had won seats.

But results show parliament will be dominated by state officials. The largest bloc is the Party of Popular Unity, which grew out of a social movement founded by Nazarbayev.

"Our parliament is not threatened by a division into factions, unlike Russia. For that we need to mature. Factions are a thing of the future," Kim told reporters. Nazarbayev on Thursday named Kim chairman of a new constitutional council.

Parliament cannot initiate laws and faces dissolution if it passes a vote of no confidence in the government. It will have 14 laws in its in-tray when it convenes.

REUTER

First gold produced at Tajik venture

RTw 1/24/96 6:19 AM

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ALMATY, Kazakhstan, Jan 24 (Reuter) - Canada's Nelson Gold Corp Ltd has produced the first gold on schedule at its Zeravshan venture, the largest foreign investment in the Central Asian state of Tajikistan, the project manager said on Wednesday.

Zeravshan, which means Gold River in Tajik, will produce three tonnes of gold a year in phase one of a three-stage plan to open up 3,000 sq km (about 1,125 square miles) of territory near the Uzbek border.

Nelson unit Commonwealth & British Minerals owns 49 percent of the Zeravshan Gold Co, while 51 percent belongs to the Tajik state, which has the first right to buy gold output.

Early production will come from the open-cast Jilau pit, which will go through a carbon-in-leach plant with a capacity of 750,000 tonnes of ore per year, venture general director Norman Livingstone told Reuters by telephone from the site.

"We visualise annual production from Jilau of around three tonnes of gold," Livingstone said. "This project will have a lifespan of 12 to 15 years."

Zeravshan joins other big gold ventures in central Asia, like Newmont Corp's Muruntau venture -- expected to make Uzbekistan the world's eighth largest producer -- and the London-listed Bakyrchik Gold plc project in Kazakhstan.

Investment totals \$50 million to date in Zeravshan, which is in a mountain valley near Pendzhikent, 150 km (95 miles) northwest of the Tajik capital Dushanbe and just over the Uzbek border from the ancient Silk Road city of Samarkand.

Livingstone said there were plenty of other prospective sites on the territory already surveyed by geologists before financing collapsed after the breakup of the Soviet Union.

Tajikistan has been hit by a three-year civil conflict, but fighting has centred on clashes involving rebels in northern Afghanistan, away from the isolated Zeravshan site.

Livingstone said measured and indicated reserves of ore at

Jilau were 32 million tonnes, which with a gold content of 1.38 grammes per tonne amounted to 44 tonnes of pure gold.

Gold has seen a sudden and swift surge above the \$400 an ounce mark on commodity markets around the world recently, its highest levels since August 1993. It was trading at \$403 in London on Wednesday.

Russian defence minister to visit Kazakhstan

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ALMATY, Jan 24 (Reuter) - Russian Defence Minister Pavel Grachev will visit Kazakhstan on Thursday for talks on deepening military cooperation with the vast former Soviet republic which borders China, the Kazakh government said on Wednesday.

A defence ministry statement said the working visit would focus on implementing agreements already signed between the two countries.

Grachev's visit takes place a year after Kazakh leader Nursultan Nazarbayev and Russian President Boris Yeltsin signed a deal to unify their armed forces as part of a possible collective security pact for the former Soviet states.

So far, cooperation has focused on Russia providing training and equipment to the Kazakh forces, which have been seriously weakened by the loss of senior Russian personnel.

China, seen by both Russia and Kazakhstan as a potential regional adversary, reported progress on Tuesday in talks on trimming border forces with the post-Soviet states on its frontier which also include Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan.

Yeltsin and the other central Asian leaders are tentatively scheduled to visit Shanghai in March to sign a declaration on settling outstanding border disputes with China.

Kazakhstan used to be a nuclear power, but has declared a moratorium on atomic tests and shipped its last nuclear warheads back to Russia in 1995.

REUTER

U.S seeking changes in SE Asia nuclear free pact

RTw 1/13/96 6:19 AM

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BANGKOK, Jan 13 (Reuter) - The United States was seeking changes in a southeast Asian nuclear weapons free zone pact to address worries it had about rights of navigation in the region, a U.S. official said on Saturday.

Winston Lord, a U.S. assistant secretary of state for east Asian and Pacific affairs, said the recently agreed southeast Asian nuclear pact would gain much greater significance if it was supported by the United States and other nuclear weapons

powers.

"Our principle concern is the application of this free zone to the continental shelf and the (offshore) economic zones," Lord told a news conference.

"This does have to do with navigation, it does have to do with assurances that can be made," he said.

Ten southeast Asian countries signed the treaty in December banning the possession, manufacture and acquisition of nuclear weapons and called on the world's nuclear powers to support the move by signing a protocol attached to it.

The accord allows "innocent passage" of foreign warships and submarines which may be carrying nuclear weapons. Ships passing through the region's waters or docking in its ports are allowed to go through if they show no warlike intentions.

But the five nuclear powers, led by the United States and China, objected to the treaty's protocol, saying it implied territorial rights that they do not accept and may threaten their ability to move warships around the globe.

ASEAN officials said at the time that as well as U.S. reservations, China had complained the treaty may jeopardise its territorial claims to the Spratly Islands in the South China Sea, to which four ASEAN members also have claims.

"Clearly, for us to be comfortable, and I suspect for the other nuclear powers, we're going to have to work out some way to make some adjustments," Lord said.

"There are significant issues still to be worked out," he said.

"If this treaty is to take on even greater significance it should have the support/adherence of the nuclear powers," he said.

The treaty, inked at the end of a three-yearly summit of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) in Bangkok, created a vast Asian nuclear arms-free zone from Burma and Vietnam in the north to Indonesia in the south.

It was signed by the leaders of the seven ASEAN countries -- Brunei, Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and Vietnam -- and their neighbours Burma, Cambodia and Laos.

The pact also bans the dumping of nuclear waste in ASEAN waters and gives guidelines for the monitoring of nuclear power.

Lord, who arrived in Bangkok earlier on Saturday at the beginning of a tour of the region, said he would be discussing U.S. concerns about the pact and ways it could be amended in his meetings with officials in Thailand and elsewhere.

Lord will also visit Cambodia, Laos, Vietnam, Hong Kong and the Philippines.

The CIS Summit: Kazakhstan

UPn 1/12/96 4:45 AM

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UPI NewsFeature
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(editors: the cis summit opens fri, jan 19)

Kazakhstan boasts of boom 'potential'

By RON LAURENZO

United Press International

In many ways, Kazakhstan is the Texas of the Commonwealth of Independent States.

A huge territory encompassing deserts, steppes and snow-covered mountains, it is endowed with tremendous reserves of oil and other natural resources, giving it true boom potential.

As Texas marked the frontier between the Spanish and English-speaking New World, Kazakhstan straddles the frontier between Slavic Christendom and the Islamic states of Central Asia. For millennia it has been the cradle, conquest route and battleground of competing peoples.

To the south lies the instability of Tajikistan, Afghanistan and Pakistan, as well as the specter of Tehran's fundamentalist influence, never far from the minds of Russian and Kazakh leaders. Like Texas, its social fabric is primarily a blend of two ethnic groups, the Kazakhs and Russians.

Tension between Russians and Kazakhs, along with struggles between different Kazakh clans, could mar what has become known as the friendliest business atmosphere in the Commonwealth of Independence States.

Sprawling 2,000 miles (3,200 km) eastward from China along Russia's southern border to the Caspian Sea, Kazakhstan is second only to Russia among the former Soviet republics in size and material wealth.

Kazakhstan's oil reserves have evoked comparisons with Kuwait and Alaska, and it boasts the tenth-largest natural gas field in the world and one quarter of Earth's known uranium reserves. It has the world's largest zinc deposits, ranks second in lead, chrome and silver and third in copper. Gold and other metals are also abundant.

Kazakhstan flung open its doors to domestic and foreign investment with a vigorous privatization drive in 1993, and is often touted as the CIS's market reform flagship.

It leads the Commonwealth with \$48 billion in foreign investment pledges, \$10 billion more than Russia, and also takes a CIS first place with \$1.5 billion already invested.

But recent changes in legislation have hurt foreign investors. Political complications and bureaucratic red tape have also taken their toll, driving out a number of large potential investors and hurting profits of others.

Since independence, President Nursultan Nazarbayev has strengthened his grip over Kazakhstan, using Soviet-style controls to hush opposition groups and muzzle the press, while increasing his own powers and those of his clan.

Under Nazarbayev, Kazakhs have begun to assert their dominance over non-Kazakhs, assuming a number of positions in government and business disproportionate to the population. University enrollment has also been slanted to favor Kazakhs.

Recent ethnic tensions have centered around Cossacks -- themselves often virulent Russian nationalists. The Kazakh government has been accused of unlawfully detaining them and denying them political and civil rights.

Estimates vary, but up to a million Russians have left Kazakhstan

since independence, although many of them may have emigrated not for political or ethnic reasons but for economics -- fleeing after losing their jobs when the Kazakh industrial sector collapsed along with the Soviet Union.

Nazarbayev, 55, a career Communist Party functionary, came to power in 1989 and retained his position after independence.

In March 1995, Nazarbayev dissolved parliament and in April extended his rule to the year 2000 with a Soviet-style referendum. After winning public approval for a strongly pro-presidential constitution in August, he ruled by decree until December parliamentary elections and is by far the strongest single element in Kazakh politics.

Nazarbayev has scoffed at critics who have declared Kazakh elections undemocratic.

"I believe in the present conditions we must have a Kazakh standard and not someone else's standard," he said after a parliamentary ballot in 1994. "We have not yet reached European standards in the economy or in the development of democracy, however we are moving toward that goal. "

After becoming the first company in 1993 to buy property in Kazakhstan, Philip Morris alone has sunk \$340 million into Kazakhstan, where it produces 1 billion cigarettes a month for the domestic market and plans to increase output.

Kazakhstan signed a letter of intent in August with Turkey for a \$1.7 billion pipeline to connect the Tengiz oil fields in the western part of the country to Turkish ports.

Mobil, Chevron, British Gas and Italian Agip hold 50 percent of the shares in another pipeline consortium, valued at up to \$400 million, to link the Tengiz field with the Russian port of Novorossisk on the Black Sea. The consortium's other members are Kazakhstan and Russian oil giant LUKoil.

Construction is slated to begin in January 1996 and be completed in 1997. The 930 mile (1,400 km) long pipeline is to carry up to 70 million tons (489.86 million barrels) annually when it reaches full capacity around 12 years after start up.

To get its goods to world markets, Kazakhstan relies on roads and pipelines -- all part of the Soviet system -- running through Russia. As a result, Moscow has a large say in how Kazakhstan's resources are exploited and has used its pipeline monopoly to discourage foreign oil companies while promoting its own.

Russian control of export routes for Kazakh oil has emasculated Chevron's \$20 billion investment in the Tengiz oil field, forcing production to about a tenth of its potential and prompting Chevron to reduced its planned investments in 1995 from \$500 million to \$50 million.

Russia's influence is a serious handicap for Kazakhstan as it tries to become the Central Asian tiger. It has led to a resumption of the Great Game -- the term for the wrangling between Russia and Great Britain over the region in the 19th century -- with Russia, the United States and Turkey playing leading roles.

Although Kazakh industrial production has continued to decline, a tight monetary policy has helped cool inflation, which was poised to drop from 1,200 in 1994 to less than 200 percent last year.

The Kazakh government reported in 1995 the economy is pulling out of recession. With continued structural assistance from the World Bank, tighter banking regulations, strict fiscal policy, and more investment, forecasters say Kazakhstan's GDP could begin

growing by 1997.

Kazakhstan is home to Baikonur, the Cape Kennedy of the Russian space program, which Moscow now rents. The nation became a nuclear power after the collapse of the Soviet Union when it inherited part of the Soviet strategic missile force, but has pledged to rid itself of all nuclear weapons.

In Soviet times, hundreds of atmospheric and underground atomic tests were conducted at Semipalatinsk, the USSR's second major testing ground, spurring strong environmental and anti-nuclear movements.

Death toll in Kazakhstan blizzards reaches 113

RTw 1/4/96 7:02 AM

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ALMATY, Jan 4 (Reuter) - Two weeks of blizzards have killed 113 people in northern Kazakhstan and five are missing, the state emergency committee said on Thursday.

Committee spokesman Valery Petrov told Reuters the blizzards caused damage estimated at 200 million tenge (\$3 million).

Worst affected region in the former Soviet republic was Akmola, where 64 people died of frostbite.

According to weather forecasts no blizzards are expected in northern Kazakhstan in the next two weeks.

REUTER

Kazakhstan-Blizzard

APn 12/29/95 8:59 AM

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ALMATY, Kazakhstan (AP) -- The death toll from blizzards raging across northern and western Kazakhstan rose to 107 today, and searchers said there was little chance of finding five missing people.

The ITAR-Tass news agency said "there is virtually no hope that they are alive."

After days of fierce wind and snow storms sweeping down from Siberia, the weather turned warmer today in the former Soviet republic in Central Asia. ITAR-Tass said the snow was turning into rain.

The blizzards have killed livestock, left tens of thousands of people without electricity, and inflicted an estimated \$3 million in damage.

Kazakhstan decrees private land ownership

RTw 12/26/95 8:12 AM

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ALMATY, Dec 26 (Reuter) - Kazakhstan leader Nursultan Nazarbayev signed a law on Tuesday allowing private ownership of land, ending a fiery debate over private property after decades of Communism in the resource-rich former Soviet republic.

The new law paves the way for foreign investors to buy property in the vast country.

It provides for the sale or transfer of state land to private owners

for temporary or permanent use. It also allows individuals and companies to own land on which productive assets are operating or residential buildings are situated.

"This law allows foreign investors buying real estate to acquire the land on which it is situated," Andrei Kotlov, a legal advisor to Nazarbayev, told Reuters.

Restrictions remain on military bases and common land, which are barred from private ownership, while farmland may be privately owned only by Kazakh citizens.

REUTER

Kazakhstan holds second round of lower house polls

RTw 12/23/95 11:46 AM

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By Larisa Kokovinets

ALMATY, Dec 23 (Reuter) - Kazakhstan held runoff elections on Saturday for 23 seats in the lower house of parliament left undecided after first-round voting for the 67-seat chamber.

Of 41 first round winners only 32 deputies have been confirmed as having gained an outright majority. Appeals by losing candidates in nine seats are under review, according to official results earlier this week.

First-round voting was repeated on Saturday in a 24th seat because of a dispute.

In two other outstanding seats, a second-round ballot has been set for one of them on February 4 while the election commission is investigating the first-round vote in the other.

Saturday's elections to the Mazhilis, which has weak powers alongside those exercised by President Nursultan Nazarbayev, should enable the two-chamber parliament to start work in the new year after a spell of direct rule by Nazarbayev.

"The results of the elections should be valid in all seats," election commission spokeswoman Zagipa Balieva told Reuters.

Official results are due in 10 days.

Local election observers following the voting in one Almaty district said they saw cases of illegal multiple voting -- in which one

voter casts ballots on behalf of relatives -- despite criticism of the practice by observers in the first round.

Election officials did not hide the practice from journalists touring polling stations.

Multiple voting was one of the violations which led to 1994 polls being annulled last March, ushering in a period when Nazarbayev used special powers to call referendums to extend his term into the next century and pass a new constitution.

Six parties took part in the polls, including the opposition Communists. In the first round only six runners from the pro-government Party of National Unity got through, along with four from the Democratic Party, which also supports Nazarbayev.

REUTER

BRF--Kazakhstan-Diphtheria

APn 12/22/95 12:31 PM

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ALMATY, Kazakhstan (AP) -- Diphtheria in Kazakhstan has killed at least 51 people and sickened hundreds this year in the worst outbreak in decades.

"The disease has acquired epidemic proportions in the republic. More than 700 cases have been registered this year," Health Ministry spokeswoman Gulnur Kembabanova told the Interfax news agency on Friday.

According to Kembabanova, the sickness has not been so prevalent since the 1960s, when there was no widespread vaccination.

Kembabanova blamed the spread of the diphtheria on apathy and distrust of doctors and vaccines, along with Kazakhstan's worsening sanitation.

Diphtheria is a contagious infection of the upper respiratory system or the skin, which in severe cases can result in heart damage and death.

Diphtheria epidemics also have swept other former Soviet republics, including Russia and Ukraine, in the past two years.

Several candidates appeal outcome of Kazakh poll

RTw 12/20/95 10:49 AM

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ALMATY, Dec 20 (Reuter) - Several unsuccessful candidates have appealed against the outcome of the December 9 first round of Kazakhstan's parliamentary election, official results showed on Wednesday.

The information, published in the official press, showed that only 32 of the 41 seats where the candidates appeared to win an

outright majority in the first round had been registered as valid, showing that there were nine appeals.

The central election commission declined to comment on the appeals or on the results. The newspapers published no data on the party affiliations of the winners.

The protests may hold up President Nursultan Nazarbayev's hopes of getting parliament working again. He has ruled this former Soviet republic by decree for nine months since 1994 elections to a previous parliament were ruled illegal.

Parliament has few powers under a constitution approved in August which gives Nazarbayev sweeping powers.

Foreign and local observers had said the election repeated the violations of the 1994 poll. Multiple voting -- when one person casts ballots on behalf of relatives -- had boosted turnout and there were irregularities in the count.

The election authorities said turnout was 80 percent.

Six parties took part in the polls, including the opposition communists. But their chances were hit by a dull campaign and the absence of party names on voting slips.

Run-off elections will be held on Saturday in several constituencies where no candidate won an overall majority.

Pro-democracy campaigners said the elections failed to return deputies who genuinely represented the voters.

"Not all social groups and parties will be represented in parliament -- it will be dominated by the nomenklatura," Yevgeny Zhovtis, of the Kazakhstan-American Bureau on Human Rights, told an independent television station, referring to the successes of state officials.

REUTER

Kazakh polls keep Nazarbayev in control

RTw 12/10/95 1:32 PM

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By Douglas busvine

ALMATY, Dec 10 (Reuter) - Kazakhstan's parliamentary polls fell short of government pledges to restore democracy, leaving president Nursultan Nazarbayev firmly at the helm of this former Soviet republic, observers and analysts said on Sunday.

The elections end a spell of direct rule by Nazarbayev in which a new constitution was passed granting him sweeping powers over this ethnically diverse state bordering Russia.

Although Nazarbayev said "democracy is knocking on the door," observers said the elections were sure to return a tame parliament in no position to challenge his leadership.

"The election was about creating stability through control," said one foreign observer, who declined identification.

Local and foreign observers said Saturday's Mazhilis (lower house of parliament) vote repeated violations which led to the annulment of 1994 elections and dissolution of the old parliament last March.

A team from the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe found multiple voting, an ill-informed electorate, a dull

campaign and a lack of standardised practices in counting votes.

Initial results showed that 78 percent of the 8.9 million voters turned out, returning 43 out of 67 Mazhilis deputies.

Local observers staking out voting stations said multiple voting -- a hangover from the Soviet-era in which people cast ballots for family and friends -- had inflated turnout figures to over the 50 percent barrier needed to make them valid.

The only genuine opposition party to put up candidates, the communists, slammed rules which prevented party names from appearing on ballot papers.

Nazarbayev's spokesman Doulat Kouanyshev said Kazakhstan did not copy the party list system being used next Sunday's polls to Russia's State Duma as it led to heated debate and instability.

"Nazarbayev fears all political consolidation," Vyacheslav Sidorov, a miners' union official in the mostly-Russian city of Karaganda, said of the Kazakh leader's strategy.

The result, observers said, was deep voter ignorance of who was standing and apathy after four years of independence in which three parliaments have already been scrapped.

New pro-government groups like the Party of Popular Unity will probably end up dominating parliament, offering programmes as diverse as "five flavours of vanilla," one observer quipped.

Analysts say Nazarbayev does not want to let politics get out of hand in Kazakhstan for fear of provoking a large Russian minority disaffected by the country's post-independence slump.

Russian candidates made up just a quarter of the total, even though Slavs represent nearly two-fifths of the population -- a figure that is falling due to emigration.

"The Russians aren't buying into anything. They've got one foot out of the door," one said.

Under the new basic law the two-chamber parliament cannot initiate laws and may be dissolved if it passes a vote of no confidence in the government. It cannot impeach the president.

Nazarbayev said the new house would have to cooperate with the government. "If there is no consensus, there are other ways to resolve this constitutional conflict," he told reporters.

The Mazhilis fell two seats short of reaching a quorum, so parliament will not begin its work until after the runoffs, which have to be held within two months.

In upper house elections earlier in the week 38 out of 40 senators were returned. Nazarbayev will nominate a further seven senators once elections are completed.

REUTER

Kazakh polls fail to return quorum to lower house

RTw 12/10/95 2:01 AM

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(incorporates preliminary results)

By Douglas Busvine

ALMATY, Dec 10 (Reuter) - Voting for members of Kazakhstan's new lower house of parliament filled 43 of the 67 seats, but a second-round of balloting must be held to obtain the two-thirds

needed for a quorum, electoral officials said on Sunday.

Election commission chairman Yuri Kim reported a 78 percent turnout on Saturday among the former Soviet republic's 8.9 million voters. The 50 percent turnout needed to make the polls valid was achieved in all constituencies.

According to preliminary figures, runoffs will be needed in 23 seats and counting is continuing in one district. No details of the party affiliations of victors were published.

"We don't have a quorum, therefore the first session of parliament will be held after the election of the required number of deputies," Kim said.

Election observers and opposition parties said they saw violations such as multiple voting and collection of votes from absentees. They added that they were barred from scrutinising the count in some polling centres.

Kim conceded that multiple voting was prevalent, but despite attempts to stamp out the Soviet-era practice, inertia among voters and local officials meant it had continued.

Opposition parties sharply criticised rules they said hampered their election chances, voters were apathetic and observers said violations committed in 1994 elections later declared illegal had been repeated.

"One person, one vote was a principle the government agreed to abide by in numerous international agreements -- but multiple voting was widespread," one foreign observer said.

"They had to reach 50 percent, and without relying on this I doubt 50 percent would have been reached," the observer added.

Election rules in this former Soviet republic prevented party slates from being put on ballots, leaving voters to pick any name they could recognise after a lifeless campaign.

The rules made elections in Kazakhstan different from next Sunday's elections to the State Duma in neighbouring Russia, where half the seats are being fought over on party lists.

Communists, who want to recreate the Soviet Union, are expected to do well in Russia. Their counterparts in Kazakhstan, who had only nine out of 28 candidates registered, were furious.

"It is very bad that the party is not shown on the bulletin. This is done intentionally to confuse people," a spokesman for the Communists, an opposition party, told Reuters on Saturday.

Four new pro-government parties stood against two opposition parties. The socialist party boycotted the polls.

The Party of National Unity, registered this year and based on a social movement founded two years ago by President Nursultan Nazarbayev, put up the most candidates and said it was happy with the polls.

Parliament was dissolved in March after the 1994 elections were annulled. Nazarbayev has since held two referendums, one to extend his term to 2000 and a second to pass a new constitution.

Under the new basic law the two-chamber parliament cannot initiate laws and may be dissolved if it passes a vote of no confidence in the government. It cannot impeach the president.

Nazarbayev said the new house would have to cooperate with the government. "If there is no consensus, there are other ways to resolve this constitutional conflict," he told reporters.

REUTER

Opposition parties unhappy as Kazakhstan votes

RTw 12/9/95 6:39 AM

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(Writes through, adds communist party reaction)

By Douglas Busvine

ALMATY, Dec 9 (Reuter) - Kazakhstan held multi-party polls to the lower house of a new parliament on Saturday, but voters were apathetic and opposition parties were angered by rules which hampered their chances of getting elected.

A total of 278 candidates, including representatives of six parties, stood in polls to the 67-seat Mazhilis after indirect elections returned 38 out of 40 senators earlier in the week.

Election rules in the former Soviet republic prevented party affiliations from being put on ballots, leaving voters to pick any name they could recognise after a dull election campaign.

The rule makes elections in Kazakhstan different from next Sunday's elections to the State Duma in neighbouring Russia, where half the seats at stake will be fought over by party lists.

"We chose to abandon the principle of party lists at this stage of transition," President Nursultan Nazarbayev said after voting at mid-morning in the capital.

"This is also a matter of regret in Russia. To create additional chaos in such difficult conditions is not good."

Communists, who want to recreate the Soviet Union, are expected to do well in Russia. Their counterparts in Kazakhstan -- who put up 28 candidates but only had nine registered -- were furious.

"It is very bad that the party is not shown on the voting bulletin.

This is done intentionally to confuse people," a spokesman for the communists, an opposition party, told Reuters.

Four new pro-government parties stood against two opposition parties, but over a third of candidates were independents.

The largest number of candidates -- 38 -- came from the Party of National Unity, which was founded this year and is based on a social movement founded two years ago by Nazarbayev.

The central election commission said that by two p.m. (0600 gmt) 52.3 percent of voters had turned out -- just above the 50 percent required to make the elections valid.

Turnout was highest in the Almaty region at 67 percent, but turnout was 40 percent in some depressed northern regions where ethnic Russians outnumber indigenous Kazakhs.

Despite what appeared to be a thin trickle of people voting in Almaty, the figures pointed to a final official turnout similar to the 90

percent in last August's constitutional referendum.

"I didn't vote for the party, but for the person," said 67-year-old

Tatar Latfulla Vaishev, voting in Almaty.

Outside the capital, a majority of voters at the Karagaily Kaskelen state farm had already cast their ballots for the only

candidate, Maria Zhuyiriktayeva of the Party of National Unity.

"I don't know which party she represents, but she has worked for a long time for our administration," said Abybakir Akhmarov.

"She knows how to do business, unlike those city chatterboxes."

The communists said their observers had spotted electoral violations, including multiple voting, illegal vote collection and the tearing down of campaign posters by the militia.

With so many candidates standing, many undecided seats will be settled by runoffs requiring a simple majority.

Under the new constitution the two-chamber parliament cannot initiate laws and may be dissolved if it passes a vote of no confidence in the government. It cannot impeach the president.

Nazarbayev has ruled by decree since the old parliament was dissolved in March after its election was annulled. He said the new house had no choice but to cooperate with the government.

"If there is no consensus, there are other ways to resolve this constitutional conflict," he told reporters.

Official results are due in a week, but preliminary figures may be released earlier, election officials said.

REUTER

Kazakhstan elects lower house of parliament

RTw 12/9/95 2:51 AM

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By Douglas Busvine

ALMATY, Dec 9 (Reuter) - Kazakhstan held multi-party polls to the lower house of a new parliament on Saturday, but wintry weather dampened the enthusiasm of the nine million electorate after a lacklustre campaign in the former Soviet republic.

The total of 278 candidates, including runners from six parties, stood in polls to the 67-seat Mazhilis after indirect elections returned 38 out of 40 senators earlier in the week.

Voting was overshadowed by elections to the State Duma, Russian parliament's lower house, next Sunday. The Communist Party, which campaigns for the revival of the defunct Soviet Union, is likely to put up a strong showing at the Duma polls.

Heated campaigning for Russia's Duma is seen as a threat to stability in Kazakhstan -- a four-year-old independent state where nearly two-fifths of the population are Slavs.

In setting the election rules, Kazakhstan dropped the idea of holding a vote by party lists -- a mechanism that improved chances for parties opposing Russian President Boris Yeltsin in the Duma elections.

Ballot slips in Kazakhstan did not give the party affiliation of candidates -- leaving them to vote on the basis of their names alone.

"We chose to abandon the principle of party lists at this stage of transition," Kazakh President Nursultan Nazarbayev said as he voted in Almaty at mid-morning.

"This is also a matter of regret in Russia. To create additional chaos in such difficult conditions is not good."

Four recently-founded pro-government parties are fielding

candidates. Two are in opposition -- including the Communists.

The trickle of early voters was mostly made up of pensioners hardest hit by Kazakhstan's post independence economic slump.

"I didn't vote for the party, but for the person," said 67-year-old

Latfulla Vaishev. "There wasn't the chaos there is today under the communists."

With so many candidates standing, a second round is likely in many constituencies. The first round requires a 50-more percent win to be valid, while runoffs will be decided by a simple majority.

According to a survey by the independent Giller Institute research organisation, 65.9 percent of voters said they would take part, 13.1 percent would not and 21 percent were undecided.

But in the capital the number intending to vote was just 46 percent. In rural areas 73 percent said they planned to vote.

Under a new constitution approved by referendum in August the two-chamber parliament cannot initiate laws and may be dissolved if it votes no-confidence in the government.

It cannot impeach the president.

Nazarbayev said parliament must not oppose but cooperate with the government, which is drafting a legislative programme.

"If there is no consensus, then there are other ways to resolve this constitutional conflict -- and not enter into conflict between the branches of power," Nazarbayev said.

Nazarbayev has ruled by decree since the old parliament -- whose inactivity made it deeply unpopular -- was dissolved in March after a court ruled elections a year earlier illegal.

Foreign observers had criticised the polls at the time. The Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) and the European Parliament have sent teams to monitor these polls.

Voting will last until 8 p.m. (1400 GMT). Turnout figures may be published on Saturday, but final results are not due for a week, election officials said.

REUTER

Key facts about Kazakhstan before weekend poll

RTw 12/8/95 7:52 AM

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ALMATY, Dec 8 (Reuter) - These are the key facts about Kazakhstan, where elections to the lower house of parliament take place on Saturday.

Population: 17 million and falling due to heavy emigration. Kazakhs make up 46 percent, Russians 34.8 percent, Ukrainians 4.1 percent and Germans 3.1 percent. The official language is Kazakh, but most people's first language is Russian.

Area: 2.7 million sq km. Kazakhstan borders Russia to the north, China to the east, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan to the south and the Caspian Sea to the west.

Capital: Almaty, population 1.2 million. The capital is due to move to the northern city of Akmola in the next few years.

State and government: A constitution adopted in August makes Kazakhstan a presidential republic, led by former steelworker and

ex-Soviet politburo member Nursultan Nazarbayev.

A twin-chamber parliament has an indirectly elected 47-seat senate and a directly elected 67-seat lower house of Mazhilis.

Parliament has weak powers. It risks dissolution if it votes no confidence in the government. It cannot initiate legislation and cannot impeach the president.

Religion: Kazakhs are by tradition Sunni Moslems and most Russians are Orthodox Christians.

History: Kazakhs emerged as a Turkic-speaking nomadic race roaming the steppe in the 15th century. The three Kazakh hordes were subdued by Russian tsars in the 18th and 19th century.

During the 1917 Russian revolution and ensuing civil war, many Kazakhs fled into exile. Over a million Kazakhs died during Soviet leader Josef Stalin's farm collectivisation in the 1930s and the Kazakhs became a minority in their own country.

Many of Stalin's political prisoners were sent to labour camps in Kazakhstan, along with wartime deportees from ethnic minorities like Germans and Chechens.

Slav settlement during Nikita Khrushchev's virgin lands agricultural campaign further diluted the Kazakh population.

Almaty was hit by rioting in 1986 when Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev replaced longtime communist party first secretary Dinmukhamed Kunayev, a Kazakh, with an ethnic Russian.

Nazarbayev became the head of the Kazakh party in 1989 and joined the Soviet politburo the following year. Kazakhstan became independent in 1991.

Nazarbayev declared a moratorium on nuclear testing after over 500 blasts had been held at the Semipalatinsk polygon -- and the country has become a non-nuclear weapons state.

The Soviet-era parliament dissolved itself in December 1993 and a fresh round of elections were held in March 1994.

Slammed by foreign observers at the time, the polls were ruled invalid by the constitutional court in March 1995.

Nazarbayev seized the opportunity to hold plebiscites to extend his term to 2000 and pass a new constitution creating the two-chamber parliament being elected now.

Economy: Output in Kazakhstan's heavily industrialised economy, tied in the north closely to Russia, has halved since independence but should stabilise next year.

The tenge currency, introduced in late 1993, is steady. Inflation has been cut and financial markets are developing.

A three-year government plan targets single-digit inflation by 1998, rapid privatisation and better living standards.

This year's grain harvest, hit by drought, was the worst in 30 years. But the country is rich in energy and metals.

The largest foreign investor is Chevron, which has a 50 percent stake in a \$20 billion project to develop the Tengiz oilfield. Investment is currently at a go-slow due to wrangling over building an export pipeline via Russia to the Black Sea.

Kazakhstan also has the world's largest reserves of zinc and uranium, the second largest of lead, chrome and silver and the third largest of copper.

The government recently privatised the Karmet steelworks, which accounts for 10 percent of gross domestic product.

FEATURE - Election razzamatazz leaves Kazakhstan ...

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FEATURE - Election razzamatazz leaves Kazakhstan voters unmoved

By Douglas Busvine

KARAGANDA, Kazakhstan, Dec 8 (Reuter) - Candidate Valery Gromov's moustachioed portrait hangs outside the main department store in Karaganda, Kazakhstan's second city.

A promotional video on local television, filmed by a cameraman with an unsteady hand, shows him boating with his family and friends and stoking a barbecue.

Before the Saturday night ice hockey match, where the Karaganda steel works team beat visitors from Minsk 2-1, the public address booms out an appeal to elect Gromov.

Instead of giving a campaign speech, he reads poetry to an audience of 800 at an evening of ethnic dancing and music.

Welcome to the Kazakh-style campaign for Saturday's election to the Mazhilis, or lower house of parliament.

Gromov, a bulldog of a man who runs sport in the region, is standing for the Party of National Unity, which is putting up the most runners in elections to a new two-chamber parliament.

Six parties are standing, four of them sympathetic to President Nursultan Nazarbayev. Two opposition parties, including the communists are also fielding candidates.

There is little doubt that Gromov, whose party grew out of a social movement founded by Nazarbayev, is the regional administration's "official" candidate.

Down at the street market, unemployed miners and factory workers join pensioners to trade goods in the snow.

A loudspeaker announcement urges people to vote but traders cannot remember the name of a single candidate.

"We are completely tired of thinking. We don't know who or what to believe," says a 70-year-old woman selling shawls. "We are tired of these parties -- they change every day."

Valery Giss, a 23-year-old ethnic German, says he lost his job at a factory and now sells blankets.

He is waiting for permission to emigrate to Germany.

"We don't know what we are voting for. This is our life, standing in the bazaar. It's impossible. We don't get paid. All the factories have closed," he said. "We won't vote."

The vote in Kazakhstan is overshadowed by Russia's December 17 election, especially in the north of the ex-Soviet republic.

Karaganda, a city of 600,000 people 800 km (500 miles) northwest of Almaty, has a majority Russian population.

Inhabitants are mainly descended from political prisoners in Stalin's labour camps, with minorities such as Germans and Chechens, deported here in World War Two.

They dug the mines that supplied the industry making weapons to send to the Red Army at the front.

Survivors from the camps are still stranded here, like 76-year-old Ukrainian nationalist Emilyan Mikhailchuk.

Inflation has destroyed his savings, so he cannot go home.

Mikhailchuk spent 10 years in a camp with 150,000 other

Ukrainians in the Karaganda region. He was kept here even after his release.

Asked about the Kazakh election, he said: "We are not interested. But one thing is clear, if the candidate is a communist we won't vote for him."

More important for Mikhailchuk is whether the communists triumph in Russia.

"The elections in Russia have an effect on us. God forbid that the communists win. According to all indicators they could come to power but we still hope," he said.

Kazakhstan held the first round of elections for its Senate, parliament's upper house, on Tuesday.

The indirect polls, by ballot at regional councils, were weakly contested. Election officials said only 49 candidates stood for 40 contested seats, two were undecided and will go to a second round within two months.

Nazarbayev will nominate seven senators directly.

In Saturday's election, 285 candidates are contesting 67 seats. Where there is no outright winner, runoffs will be held later.

Nazarbayev briefed foreign observers in Almaty on Wednesday this week, responding angrily to comments that most candidates were pro-government.

"We lived under totalitarianism for 300 years," he said. "Establishing parties needs time. In conditions of crisis we need cooperation between the government and political parties."

Nazarbayev has sweeping powers under a constitution approved in August during a period of presidential rule after the old parliament's dissolution in March.

The new parliament cannot initiate legislation and risks dissolution if it passes a no-confidence vote in the government. It may not impeach the president.

"We tried to make our executive powers stronger because our parties and people have no experience. Someone must help our people to acquire this experience," he said.

"Democracy cannot be achieved by decrees and laws. I want to assure you that democracy is knocking on the door."

REUTER

Little interest as Kazakhstan chooses upper house

RTw 12/5/95 3:47 AM

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ALMATY, Dec 5 (Reuter) - Kazakhstan held indirect elections on Tuesday to the upper house of a new twin-chamber parliament, with representatives of elected regional councils voting in a weakly contested poll.

Forty-nine candidates are standing for 40 available seats, while President Nursultan Nazarbayev has still to announce his seven direct nominees.

The senate poll precedes a more keenly-contested popular direct election to the 67-seat mazhilis -- or lower house -- to be held on Saturday.

Election officials said official results from the senate ballot

would not be published for a week, but preliminary data may be released earlier.

Nazarbayev, who has ruled this giant former Soviet republic by decree since the old parliament was dissolved in March, has rammed through a raft of decrees using special interim powers forcing the pace of market reforms.

He has also held two referendums -- one to prolong his term to the year 2000 and one to vote in a new constitution granting him wide discretionary powers.

Under the new constitution, parliament may not initiate legislation and risks dissolution if it expresses no-confidence in the government. It cannot impeach the president.

Political activity and public interest ahead of the poll have been low, but there are six parties and several social movements contesting the election.

The largest number of candidates, 38, has been put up by the Party of National Unity, which grew out of a movement founded by Nazarbayev. Three other pro-government and two opposition parties -- including communists -- are also taking part.

With 285 candidates running in Saturday's mazhilis elections a decisive second round will probably be needed before most seats are settled. No date has yet been fixed for the runoffs.

REUTER

At least 10 dead in Kazakhstan pit blast

RTw 11/26/95 5:14 AM

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ALMATY, Nov 26 (Reuter) - At least 10 miners died in an explosion at a coal mine in Kazakhstan and the death toll is expected to rise to 13, officials said on Sunday.

Rescue teams have recovered 10 bodies and are looking for the bodies of three others believed to have died, officials said.

The duty officer for the State Commission for Emergencies in the Karaganda region, where the explosion occurred late on Friday, said another five were in hospital with serious injuries.

"The tragedy happened after a mixture of methane and some 100 tonnes of coal powder exploded in the mine," Alexander Yevdokimov told Reuters by telephone.

Yevdokimov said methane had built up in the pit, probably because of a fault in the ventilation system. He gave no further details, saying the investigation was still under way.

President Nursultan Nazarbayev and Prime Minister Akezhan Kazhegeldin offered condolences to the families and promised them government assistance.

REUTER

Tajik leader hopes planned peace talks conclusive

RTw 11/22/95 8:37 AM

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By Douglas Busvine

ALMATY, Nov 22 (Reuter) - Tajik President Imomali Rakhmonov said on Wednesday he hoped forthcoming peace talks would prove decisive in resolving a conflict with the opposition-in-exile defeated in a 1992 civil war.

Government and opposition negotiators are due to meet on November 30 in the Turkmen capital Ashgabat for a fifth round of peace talks under U.N. auspices.

An agenda has already been set for the talks, which are planned to be open-ended to try and break out of a stop-go cycle of earlier rounds in a peace process dating back to april 1994.

"I think we Tajiks will find a common language and resolve our problems," Rakhmonov told reporters after economic talks with Kazakh President Nursultan Nazarbayev.

The government says 50,000 people were killed in the civil war. The opposition says 100,000 died. Nearly a million -- one-sixth of the Central Asian state's population -- were displaced.

Tajikistan remains paralysed by a border campaign by Islamic rebels based in neighbouring Afghanistan. Regional leaders fear stability in Central Asia is under threat without a peace deal.

"They are brothers, We have a common fate and we live in the same region," Nazarbayev said.

Opposition radio, broadcasting from Afghanistan, says that more than 200 government troops have been killed in recent fighting, which has been heaviest in the central region of Garm.

But opposition leader Sayid Abdullo Nuri has called for rebels to observe a ceasefire -- which expires next February -- ahead of the talks.

Rakhmonov said the situation was calm.

"We are watching the situation on the southern borders of the Commonwealth of Independent States -- not just the border between Tajikistan and Afghanistan," he told reporters.

Nazarbayev said the mandate of a Kazakh batallion of border guards, part of CIS border and peacekeeping forces under Russian command, would be reviewed in the new year.

The peace talks will tackle six themes -- political, military, refugees, implementation, guarantees and donor support -- agreed in August by Rakhmonov and Nuri at talks in Kabul.

Agreement on all six will enable an overall peace deal to be signed, Rakhmonov's spokesman Zafar Sayidov told Reuters.

Sayidov said there may be some slippage on the start date for the talks, which were originally planned for September and will be chaired by U.N. mediator Ramiro Piriz Ballon of Uruguay.

"We have expressed our readiness to come to Ashgabat. But everything depends on exactly when the talks begin. they may begin a bit later, but before December 10," Sayidov said.

Sayidov said opposition negotiators had also expressed their readiness to attend the talks, but had proposed the venue be switched later to the Iranian capital Tehran.

REUTER

Cossack leader jailed by Kazakh court over rally

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ALMATY, Nov 21 (Reuter) - A Cossack chieftain was jailed for three months by a Kazakh court on Tuesday after being found guilty of organising an illegal demonstration in a case which has received wide coverage in the Russian and local media.

Nikolai Gunkin, 35, ataman of south Kazakhstan's Semirechiye cossacks, protested his innocence in court. He said the trial "showed once again how anti-democratic Kazakhstan's regime is."

Trial judge Miramkhan Akhmetshiyeva told Reuters the case had been blown out of proportion by political forces seeking to benefit from publicity linked to the trial.

Prosecutors had called for a six-month sentence.

Gunkin's defence lawyer said he had attended a religious meeting to mark orthodox Christmas last January, and had not led an unsanctioned demonstration.

Some Cossack leaders, descended from the horsemen who led Russia's conquest of Central Asia in the 19th century, want a referendum to be held on reunification with Russia.

The case has come at an awkward time, as both Kazakhstan and Russia prepare for parliamentary elections in December.

Some nationalist politicians in Russia want Kazakhstan -- which has been independent since 1991 but has a large Slav minority in the north of the country -- to rejoin Russia.

REUTER

Six parties registered for Kazakh parliament polls

RTw 11/17/95 7:50 AM

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ALMATY, NOV 17 (Reuter) - Six parties have registered for elections in December to a new Kazakh parliament which will have reduced powers under a new constitution penned by President Nursultan Nazarbayev, election officials said on Friday.

Indirect polls to the 47-seat senate, or upper house, will be held on December 5. The 67-seat Mazhilis will be elected by popular vote on December 9.

The elections end nine months of rule by decree in which Nazarbayev extended his term until 2000 and consolidated his powers over this ex-Soviet republic in two referendums.

Nazarbayev will directly nominate seven of the 47 senators while 49 candidates are seeking election by local councils, central election commission chairman Yuri Kim told a news conference.

In the election for the Mazhilis, 285 candidates will dispute the 67 seats all of which will be decided by direct vote in single-member constituencies.

Among pro-government groups, the National Unity Party is putting up 38 candidates, the Democratic Party 22, the Cooperative Party 15 and the Rebirth Party five.

The opposition communists have nine candidates, while the People's Congress -- which grew out of Kazakhstan's anti-nuclear

movement -- has nominated eight runners.

The Socialist Party has decided to boycott the polls, saying they would be undemocratic because the election commission is directly appointed by the president.

Despite criticising the new constitution as undemocratic, some Western countries have agreed to monitor the polls.

The Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) has also accepted an invitation to send observers.

Foreign observers criticised March 1994 parliamentary polls at the time, and the chamber was dissolved a year later when the constitutional court annulled the elections. The constitutional court has since been abolished.

REUTER

Kazakhs try to widen Caspian oil pipeline group

RTw 11/10/95 6:15 AM

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By Douglas Busvine

ALMATY, Nov 10 (Reuter) - Kazakhstan is trying to draw oil multinational into a project to build a pipeline from its giant Tengiz oil field to the Black Sea, Prime Minister Akezhan Kazhegeldin told Reuters in an interview.

Kazhegeldin said talks were going on with Agip and British Gas to help reshape the troubled Caspian Pipeline Consortium (CPC), which in its current state is a joint venture with Oman.

The two firms could join Mobil Corp as potential Western partners in an alternative project to build the \$1 billion pipeline from the Tengiz field, half-owned by Chevron Corp.

"We are not throwing out Oman...we also invite them to take part. It will naturally be a transnational, serious project with guaranteed deliveries of crude oil," Kazhegeldin said.

The Kazakh-Russian-Omani CPC project is dormant and both Kazakhstan and Oman have accused each other of failing to meet their financial obligations on time.

Chevron has been cool to the CPC from the outset.

Kazhegeldin, who visits London this month, said he planned to meet top officials from the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development to discuss the possibility of financial backing.

"I think the club of participants is growing," he said.

He dismissed a widely-held view among oil industry professionals that Russia was blocking Kazakhstan's access to Western markets to prevent competition with its own exports.

"There are no politics here -- just no money," he said. "Russia wants us to go through Russia, but has no money to build the pipeline. Kazakhstan also wants to go through Russia but doesn't have any money either. Oman promised to give money, but set terms which did not suit my close partner Chevron."

He added: "Chevron is working on my land on a 50-50 basis, and I am obliged to support it. That's why the process is delayed."

The Tengiz project, signed in 1993, envisages investing \$20 billion over 40 years to develop reserves estimated at six to nine billion barrels.

Oil Minister Nurlan Balgimbayev said recently Kazakhstan had offered Mobil a stake of up to 20 percent in Tengiz, subject to a six-month valuation, in return for helping build the pipeline.

He also said Chevron had signalled its willingness to sell part of its stake in Tengiz to Russian oil giant Lukoil.

But Oman Oil's Ed Smith, who is a director of the CPC, said this week that an alternative project might delay oil exports by up to two years to 1999.

CPC already owns a key stretch of existing pipeline transferred by Russia's State Property Committee in return for a \$292 million subordinated debt instrument.

Kazhegeldin said that if Russia completes liberalisation of its internal market for crude and refined oil the question of the Western export route could resolve itself over time.

"For Kazakhstan there won't be any problem after five or six years. We would sell our oil to Russia," he said. "There is no difference in selling oil in Poland or in Russia. It's better in Russia because it's close."

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RTw 11/10/95 6:15 AM

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Final death toll in Kazakh gas blast put at 20

RTw 11/7/95 12:29 AM

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ALMATY, Nov 7 (Reuter) - Twenty people were killed when a gas explosion wrecked a five-storey apartment block in northern Kazakhstan last Sunday, rescue officials said on Tuesday.

All victims of the blast in the provincial city of Arkalyk, 1,100 km

(700 miles) northwest of the capital Almaty, had now been accounted for, they said. Four injured people were being treated in hospital.

Investigators suspect a gas leak in a second-floor apartment led to the explosion, which completely destroyed two floors of the block.

REUTER

Kazakhs seek \$7 billion investment in metal sector

RTw 11/1/95 9:51 AM

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By Douglas Busvine

ALMATY, Nov 1 (Reuter) - Kazakhstan offered \$7 billion worth of

projects to investors on Wednesday as part of a plan to revive its stricken metals sector and restore it to growth by the end of the century.

Industry Minister Garri Shtoik sang the praises of 53 projects in non-ferrous metals worth \$5.2 billion and 22 in ferrous metals with a price tag of \$1.8 billion.

"If we manage, step by step, to realise these projects, then we can expect complete stabilisation of the situation in the sector by 1997," he told an industry conference. "By 2000 growth of between nine and 11 percent per year could follow."

Kazakhstan's vast steppes -- the size of Western Europe -- hold the world's largest zinc reserves, the second largest of lead, chrome and silver and the third biggest of copper.

Although ore reserves are huge, they are often low grade. Exploitation that made sense to the Soviet military-industrial complex has proved uneconomic since independence in 1991.

But despite a slump in output, the metals sector still accounts for a quarter of total economic production, Shtoik said.

"Our objective will be to support the group of producers with large export potential," he told delegates.

Deputy Geology Minister Marat Bitimbayev said neither the government nor Kazakh investors could fully finance the development of mineral resources.

"Foreign investment is our greatest hope," he told an audience mainly from the International Union of Metallurgists, a professional group dating back to the Soviet Union.

Kazakhstan has attracted criticism for trying to pull foreign investment into its metallurgical sector by awarding so-called management contracts -- typically for five years.

Two such contracts for the flagship Karmet steelworks near Karaganda have unravelled. Others have gone to unknown firms in an opaque process of tendering.

Still, the few foreigners who attended were mostly upbeat about efforts to attract foreign investment.

"Kazakhstan has pulled together a very good sales package. It is ahead of other countries in the region," said Kenneth Arne of Commonwealth and British Minerals plc.

"I think Kazakhstan has got a lot of potential but we are in a prospecting phase. It will go in fits and starts over the next five to 10 years."

Commonwealth and British has operations in two other Central Asian states -- developing a gold project in northern Tajikistan and exploring for gold in Kyrgyzstan. It has yet to get involved in Kazakhstan but is looking.

"It is the same story as the colonisation of America. The first miners there were gold miners," he said.

REUTER

Nuclear fallout triples cancer in corner of Russia

RTw 10/31/95 1:06 PM

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By Lee Yanowitch

PARIS, Oct 31 (Reuter) - Cancer rates have tripled over the last 35 years in a region straddling Russia and Kazakhstan, hit by radiation from Soviet nuclear tests in the Cold War era, researchers said in Paris on Tuesday.

Scientists at a cancer conference in Paris said the findings were particularly worrying for children, who are more susceptible to cancer from nuclear fallout.

Excerpts of a paper to be presented by Professor Alexander Lazarev of the Altai State Medical University in Barnaul, Russia, said the high cancer rate occurred in the Altai region.

The area was exposed to radiation during atmospheric tests staged at the Semipalatinsk range in Kazakhstan from 1949 to 1962.

Leukaemia, a blood cancer, frequently occurs around nuclear testing sites. Thyroid cancer is next in line, while breast and lung cancer symptoms develop 10 to 30 years later.

"I find these figures extremely high," said Professor Harry Bartelink, chairman of the Scientific Committee of the ECCO 8 European Cancer Conference.

"This kind of statistical information regarding cancer around nuclear testing sites in the former Soviet Union has never been presented publicly," said Bartelink, also head of the radiotherapy department of the Netherlands Cancer Institute.

The highest increase in cancer cases in Altai was among two groups: under 29 years and over 70. Children were the most susceptible, accounting for 1.2 per cent of all cancer patients, a rate one-third higher than the average in Russia.

David Zaridze of Moscow's Cancer Research Centre said a study of children under 14 in in four regions of Kazakhstan showed that those living close to nuclear test sites had nearly twice the chance of developing acute leukaemia.

He said proximity to the sites also raised the risk of brain tumour.

"We found that acute leukaemia incidence was highest in these four regions. Then we looked at the rate of cases in relation to proximity and the rate was 1.76 higher than average within a 200-km (125-mile) radius," Zaridze said.

Data gathered from patients treated at the Institute of Endocrinology and Metabolism in Kiev showed a substantial increase in children's thyroid cancer in Ukraine after the Chernobyl accident -- between 1990 and 1994.

The form of thyroid cancer was highly aggressive and did not respond to normal treatment.

Thyroid cancer is normally treated either by removing the thyroid, radioactive iodine or hormone substitution which renders the thyroid inactive to prevent the cancer from growing.

Bartelink said that globally, 50 percent of cancers are cured by treatment. But those cancers caused by exposure to radiation were "nearly impossible to cure."

The nuclear test range at Semipalatinsk in Kazakhstan was the largest such nuclear test site in the world, one of two used by the former Soviet Union, along with Novaya Zemlya in northern Russia.

Kazakhstan has disavowed nuclear weapons since becoming independent in 1991.

An estimated 459 blasts were conducted at the Semipalatinsk range -- 113 of them in above-ground tests before 1963.

The U.S. and Kazakhstan this month signed an agreement to seal up the Central Asian state's vast tunnel complex so it can never test nuclear weapons again.

REUTER

Kazakhs to value Tengiz stake before sale to Mobil

RTw 10/31/95 8:34 AM

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By Douglas Busvine

ALMATY, Oct 31 (Reuter) - Kazakhstan plans to sell part of its half share in the giant Tengiz oilfield to U.S. group Mobil Corp but exactly how much depends on a six-month valuation of its stake, Oil Minister Nurlan Balgimbayev said on Tuesday.

"We confirm that Kazakhstan is prepared to sell a part of its share in Tengiz to Mobil," Balgimbayev told a news conference.

Balgimbayev was briefing reporters on President Nursultan Nazarbayev's visit to the United States, where officials met executives from Mobil and Chevron Corp -- the Western partner in the Tengizchevroil joint venture.

He said the Kazakh side would finish evaluating its holding in the 40-year, \$20 billion Tengiz venture next April.

A stake of up to 20 percent could be for sale and more may be offered later. He gave no details.

Mobil's Almaty office declined to comment on reports that it could join the Tengiz project, while Chevron representatives were unavailable for comment.

Balgimbayev said Mobil's participation in Tengiz would be contingent on it taking part in a new scheme to build an oil pipeline from Tengiz in northwest Kazakhstan to the Russian Black Sea port of Novorossiisk.

"Mobil has agreed to take part in building a pipeline to Novorossiisk," Balgimbayev said. "That is why Kazakhstan sees it as necessary to sell part of its share in Tengiz to Mobil."

He said Oman had failed to raise financing by an October 1 deadline for the Kazakh-Russian-Omani Caspian Pipeline Consortium (CPC) formed back in 1992.

The \$1 billion CPC project has never got off the ground, plagued by holdups and boycotted from the outset by Chevron.

"Oman was not able to present financing...We have started to examine alternatives to the CPC," Balgimbayev said.

In the United States he met Chevron chief executive Kenneth Derr, who signalled his readiness to sell part of Chevron's stake in Tengizchevroil to Russia's Lukoil.

"Mr Derr gave a positive answer to the request of Kazakhstan and Lukoil," he said. "Here the question is the same -- determining the value of one percent and the purchase by Lukoil of a certain share...from Chevron."

Kazakhstan is talking to Chevron, Mobil, British Gas, Agip and Lukoil about building the alternative link to Novorossiisk.

But the ownership breakdown would be the same as the CPC.

Kazakhstan and Russia would each own a quarter, while foreign investors would bear the full investment cost in return for a

joint 50 percent holding, Balgimbayev said.

He said Russia had given its full backing and added that Oman would not be shut out of the project.

"As I have said before, Oman can take part in building this pipeline with the assets it invests," Balgimbayev said.

Industry sources in this vast former Soviet republic say any signs of progress on a new export pipeline are welcome.

"All of us are very concerned about getting that pipeline up but most of us are still involved in exploration -- which gives us more time than Chevron," one industry source said.

Getting Russia on board could unblock exporting Kazakh oil through the only existing route via old Soviet pipelines.

Problems with routing have kept exports from the Tengiz field -- which has estimated recoverable reserves of six to nine billion barrels -- down to 60,000 barrels per day and led Chevron to freeze investment in the project this year.

REUTER

Two jailed over illegal Kazakh weapons exports

RTw 10/23/95 9:20 AM

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ALMATY, Oct 23 (Reuter) - Two Kazakh officials have been jailed for illegally exporting weapons in the first big official graft case to rock this ex-Soviet republic since independence in 1991, a supreme court spokesman confirmed on Monday.

Former deputy defence minister General Valery Sapsayev was sentenced to eight years' hard labour for his part in a deal to sell \$2 million worth of weapons abroad illegally.

Colonel Zhailaubai Sadibekov, a department chief in the ministry, jailed for 4 1/2 years with hard labour by the supreme court's military branch after a six-week trial.

A court spokesman confirmed the sentences, but declined to give further details.

Sapsayev was the first senior official to be picked up after President Nursultan Nazarbayev launched an anti-corruption drive last spring. He was convicted after a seven-month probe.

Caravan newspaper said on Monday that investigations by the military prosecutor also implicated a Russian general as a middle man in the deal.

The convictions coincided with the seizure by Russian customs agents of a trainload of weapons on its way from Kazakhstan to North Korea.

The weapons haul -- including anti-aircraft guns, cannons, cartridges and large shells -- lacked proper documentation.

REUTER

Kazakh leader fires law enforcers

UPn 10/19/95 7:16 AM

ALMATY, Oct. 19 (UPI) -- Kazakh President Nursultan Nazarbayev continued his shakeup of military and law enforcement structures Thursday, firing his top lawman and the commander of Interior

Ministry troops.

Nazarbayev issued a decree removing Interior Minister Bolat Baikenov and ministry troop commander Bulat Zhanasayev, replacing them with closer allies from within his administration.

To replace the departing Baikenov, Nazarbayev named Kairbek Suleimenov, who until his promotion had served as an adviser to the president on matters of justice and law enforcement.

The personnel moves came two days after Nazarbayev fired Defense Minister Sagadat Nurmagambekov, and on the eve of a court decision concerning a deputy defense minister charged with illegal weapons trade.

The shakeup in Kazakhstan's corridors of power began last month, when Nazarbayev created a new law enforcement organ called the State Investigation Committee and appointed a former chief prosecutor to head it.

Observers see the drawn-out rearrangement as an effort by Nazarbayev to consolidate his power over government ministries in this vast Central Asian nation, which he rules with an iron hand.

Nazarbayev has scheduled parliamentary elections for December, but the Constitution he successfully put to a referendum in August created a strong presidency and a parliament with little power to check the chief executive.

A separate popular vote last spring gave Nazarbayev a mandate to rule the resource-rich nation until 2000. Opposition leaders have charged both referendums were fixed.

Copyright 1995 The United Press International
Kazakhstan names new defence minister

RTw 10/17/95 3:00 AM

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ALMATY, Oct 17 (Reuter) - General Alibek Kasymov, previously chief of the general staff of Kazakhstan's armed forces, has been named defence minister, a presidential decree published on Tuesday said.

Kasymov, 41, replaces General Sagadat Nurmugambetov who has become a presidential advisor, officials said.

President Nursultan Nazarbayev announced the new appointment in a decree, the text of which was published in newspapers.

REUTER

Two ministers fired as Kazakhstan reshuffle begins

RTw 10/4/95 2:15 AM

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ALMATY, Oct 4 (Reuter) - Kazakhstan President Nursultan

Nazarbayev said on Wednesday he had started a cabinet reshuffle by appointing new justice and ecology ministers.

Making clear that other changes would follow, Nazarbayev told reporters: "We have started the reshuffle by appointing new ministers yesterday."

A presidential decree, issued on Tuesday, said Konstantin Kolpakov would take over the justice portfolio from Nagashbai Shaikenov.

Nikolai Bayev will replace Svyatoslav Medvedev as ecology and biological resources minister.

Shaikenov had retained his other post of deputy prime minister, the decree said.

Nazarbayev declined to say which other ministers might be replaced.

Last month he ordered Prime Minister Akezhan Kazhegeldin, under pressure to improve economic performance after nearly a year in office, to propose a new cabinet by October 2.

Kazakh official sources say the number of ministries is expected to be cut in a streamlining operation and big changes in regional governments are also on the cards.

REUTER

Deal signed to seal former Soviet nuclear test site

RTw 10/3/95 5:35 PM

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WASHINGTON, Oct 3 (Reuter) - U.S. and Kazakhstan officials signed an agreement on Tuesday to seal the former Soviet Union's nuclear test tunnel complex at Semipalatinsk so it can never test nuclear weapons again.

The complex in Degelen Mountain has 186 test tunnels and is the largest such nuclear test site in the world. It was one of two used by the former Soviet Union, along with Novaya Zemlya site in northern Russia.

Assistant Secretary of Defence Ash Carter and Kassymjomart Tokayev, head of a Kazakhstan Foreign Ministry delegation, signed a Cooperative Threat Reduction agreement that will provide up to \$171 million in U.S. aid to seal the site.

"By foreclosing future use of the complex, this project will have a positive impact on our broader efforts to enhance U.S. national security as well as international security for the post-Cold War era," the Defence Department said in a statement.

It said geological and radiological tests will begin this month in the tunnels so sealing methods and schedules can be recommended.

The goal after that will be to seal at least 60 tunnels a years and complete the work in 1999, the statement said.

REUTER

Kazakhstan sets parliamentary election date

RTw 10/2/95 1:58 PM

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ALMATY, Oct 2 (Reuter) - Kazakhstan will hold elections for a new two-chamber parliament on December 5 and 9, state television reported on Monday.

The upper chamber will be elected first by regional bodies and the lower chamber or Mejlis will be elected by voters four days later.

President Nursultan Nazarbayev signed a new election law on Thursday paving the way for the vote.

Nazarbayev, who has ruled by decree since parliament was dissolved last spring, won a constitutional referendum on August 30 which boosted his powers over this giant ex-Soviet republic.

REUTER

Kazakhstan makes new proposal in Caspian sea row

RTw 9/26/95 10:08 AM

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ALMATY, Sept 26 (Reuter) - Kazakhstan agreed on Tuesday to consider the Caspian Sea a lake as a way of easing an international row over how to exploit its rich offshore oil deposits.

Kazakh Deputy Foreign Minister Vyacheslav Gizzatov told the opening of a two-day conference that Almaty was prepared to drop its earlier demand to call the Caspian -- a saltwater body dividing the Caucasus from Central Asia -- a sea.

The collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991 threw the Caspian's legal definition into doubt, with the five littoral states split on the key issue of whether to call it a sea or a lake.

Russia and Iran say it is a lake whose resources should be shared equally by coastal states. Azerbaijan, Turkmenistan and Kazakhstan have argued it is a sea which should be carved into sectors.

Despite the change in Kazakhstan's position Almaty still insisted that territorial waters, subsea resource rights and fishing zones should still be awarded to coastal states, Gizzatov said.

"The idea of general ownership of the Caspian would not appeal to foreign investors who have already signed contracts with one of the five coastal states," he said.

Last year Azerbaijan signed a \$7.4 billion deal with a British Petroleum-led consortium to exploit 4.4 billion barrels of offshore oil deposits. The presence of Russia's LUKoil in the consortium was opposed by the Russian foreign ministry because it contradicted Moscow's diplomatic stand on the sea's status.

Foreign ministry legal experts from Azerbaijan, Turkmenistan and Iran attended the conference to work on proposals for a Caspian convention, but the Russian delegation did not turn up.

REUTER

Kazakhstan to move capital

UPn 9/15/95 10:47 AM

MOSCOW, Sept. 15 (UPI) -- Kazakh President Nursultan Nazarbayev has issued a decree (Friday) ordering preparations to move the capital of the Central Asian nation from Almaty, near the Chinese border, to the centrally located Akmola. The move to the city known as Tselinograd in Soviet times is to be completed by the year 2000.

Copyright 1995 The United Press International
Kazakh officials deny ballot-rigging in poll

RTw 9/4/95 5:32 AM

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(Releads with denial of ballot-rigging)

ALMATY, Sept 4 (Reuter) - Electoral officials in Kazakhstan on Monday denied opposition allegations of ballot-rigging after final results from a referendum showed 89.14 percent support for President Nursultan Nazarbayev's draft constitution.

Opposition leaders said less than half the electorate had turned out, making the poll invalid, and they alleged that participation figures had been inflated by illegal multiple voting and ballot stuffing.

Central election commission chairman Yuri Kim told a news conference election officials had counted votes not people. "We are certain on the basis of official data that the election was valid," he said.

Kim said 8.1 million people -- or 90.58 percent of the electorate -- took part in the referendum, of which 7.2 million had voted "Yes." Of the remainder 800,000 or 9.90 percent voted against the text, while 78,000 ballots were invalid.

The figures confirmed preliminary results announced by Nazarbayev last Thursday.

With the publication of official results the constitution, criticised in the West for increasing Nazarbayev's powers over the vast, oil-rich ex-Soviet republic, takes effect.

REUTER

Kazakh anti-nuclear protest at French embassy

RTw 9/4/95 5:17 AM

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ALMATY, Sept 4 (Reuter) - Kazakh anti-nuclear protesters held an officially sanctioned picket outside the French embassy on

Monday over France's plans to carry out a nuclear blast on in the South Pacific.

Thirty demonstrators from the Nevada-Semipalatinsk movement -- which fought successfully to end to 40 years of Soviet atomic testing in Kazakhstan -- chanted slogans and waved banners before handing a protest letter to an embassy official.

In the letter they called on French President Jacques Chirac to scrap the tests. "The tragedy of Hiroshima must not be repeated," it said.

Nearly 500 nuclear tests were held at the Semipalatinsk site between 1949 and 1989 -- with those until 1963 above ground -- with a devastating impact on the health of the local population, government research shows.

"Kazakhstanis, like no one else on earth, know the effect of nuclear testing," Nevada-Semipalatinsk leader Amangely Mustafin said.

REUTER

Kazakh constitution gets final 89.14 pct ``yes''

RTw 9/4/95 2:19 AM

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ALMATY, Sept 4 (Reuter) - Final results from Kazakhstan's referendum published on Monday showed 89.14 percent support for President Nursultan Nazarbayev's draft constitution.

Central election commission chairman Yuri Kim told Reuters 8.1 million -- or 90.58 percent of those entitled to vote -- took part in the referendum, of which 7.2 million voted "yes".

The figures confirmed preliminary results announced by Nazarbayev last Thursday. Kim denied to give a figure for those voting against the new constitution.

With the publication of official results the constitution, which increases Nazarbayev's powers over the ex-Soviet republic, takes effect.

Opposition leaders have disputed official results saying that according to their monitoring less than half of Kazakhstan's voters turned out, making the referendum invalid.

REUTER

Opposition says Kazakh referendum result falsified

RTw 9/1/95 6:20 AM

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ALMATY, Sept 1 (Reuter) - Opposition activists monitoring Kazakhstan's constitutional referendum said on Friday that less than half the electorate had voted and disputed official results showing a huge win for President Nursultan Nazarbayev.

"The results of the voting were falsified, and it shameful that we

have such a president," Mels Ilimsizov, chief organiser of the opposition monitoring effort, told a news conference.

Yuri Bunakov, head of the "Russian community" organisation, said that at 186 voting stations in Almaty the lowest turnout was 14 percent and the highest 28 percent -- far below the 50 percent participation required to make the vote valid.

An official from the central election commission dismissed the figures, which contrast sharply with the preliminary result announced by Nazarbayev on Thursday stating that 90.5 percent voted, of which 89.1 percent backed the basic law.

"All this is groundless accusation. When we receive official declarations of violations during voting then we will comment," Tatyana Oklopkova said by telephone.

A spectrum of opposition parties and movements attempted to track the voting, but many said permission given by the election authorities had been revoked at the last moment.

No international organisations or western democracies took part in monitoring the referendum on the constitution, which they say concentrates too much power in Nazarbayev's hands.

Opposition leaders alleged that the turnout had been inflated by stuffing the ballots with votes from those who had not turned up, a practice common in the Soviet era.

They planned to issue a protest to the state prosecutor, but added it would probably be turned down -- as was a similar case against a referendum in April in which Nazarbayev won a 95 percent majority to extend his term to the year 2000.

The United States, the biggest investor in the oil-rich ex-Soviet state, has already criticised the constitution -- which it said failed to meet accepted democratic norms.

REUTER

Nazarbayev hails Kazakh vote, West critical

RTw 8/31/95 9:32 AM

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(Adds Nazarbayev, U.S. statement, opposition comment)

By Douglas Busvine

ALMATY, Aug 31 (Reuter) - President Nursultan Nazarbayev of Kazakhstan hailed his overwhelming victory in a constitutional referendum on Thursday and dismissed Western criticism he was abandoning democracy in a bid to consolidate his power.

Nazarbayev told reporters that over eight million voters took part in Wednesday's referendum, or 90.5 percent of those entitled to vote, and 89.1 percent backed the constitution.

"The new constitution is adopted. I congratulate all Kazakhstanis on this historical event in the young, independent state of Kazakhstan," he said, to applause from journalists.

"By voting 'yes' the people of Kazakhstan answered the main question -- that the constitution creates the conditions for calm, peaceful and stable life in our country."

But the United States, the biggest foreign investor in this oil-rich

ex-Soviet state, was quick to criticise the basic law.

In a statement the U.S. embassy said "the constitution fails to satisfy some universally accepted democratic norms."

"While U.S.-Kazakhstan cooperation will continue following the referendum, the development of democracy in Kazakhstan will inevitably affect the closeness of U.S.-Kazakhstani relations."

Nazarbayev brushed off the criticism saying, "the people of Kazakhstan have adopted the constitution -- that's my answer."

The 55-year-old leader also came under fire from opposition leaders monitoring the plebiscite, who said that at most polling stations in the capital less than half of voters turned out and there was widespread ignorance of the text among voters.

The picture was the same in the Slav-dominated north, local opposition leaders said.

"The referendum failed and the figures published officially were falsified," said Alexander Shushanikov of Slav movement Lad (Harmony) in the northeastern city of Ust-Kamenogorsk.

The public mood was captured on a talk show on Wednesday night on the independent 'M' television station, where of 15 callers only half said they voted. Of those, the split was 50-50 for and against, station chief Sergei Duvanov told Reuters.

Under the constitution, which will be adopted after final results are published next week, Nazarbayev will be able to dissolve parliament if it votes no-confidence in the government or twice rejects his nominee for prime minister.

The text also provides for periods of presidential rule by decree -- something Nazarbayev has done since a constitutional crisis in March. He can also call for a state of emergency.

The president can only be ousted if parliament finds he is incapacitated by illness or has committed treason.

Nazarbayev promised the immediate passage of an election law and parliamentary elections, as well as a series of other laws, including a new banking act to be published on Friday.

"It will create all legal conditions to hold parliamentary elections in the republic in the near future," he said.

Nazarbayev, who earlier this year won a referendum to extend his term to 2000, squashed speculation that there would be early changes to the government of premier Akezhan Kazhegeldin.

But he said the government's record and its short-term programme for the next three years would be scrutinised at a meeting on September 20.

"We are not talking about the dismissal of the government, but more serious changes will take place in the near future to improve the team," he said, promising to promote young people.

REUTER

Nazarbayev wins huge majority in Kazakh referendum

RTw 8/31/95 12:07 AM

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(adds preliminary result, initial reaction)

By Douglas Busvine

ALMATY, Aug 31 (Reuter) - President Nursultan Nazarbayev of Kazakhstan won a predictably crushing majority in favour of a constitution which grants him broad powers to railroad through his market reforms, preliminary results showed on Thursday.

Central Election Commission chairman Yuri Kim told Reuters that 89 percent voted 'yes' at Wednesday's referendum, while 90 percent of Kazakhstan's 8.8 million voters turned out.

The result was never in doubt, but the scale of the victory and turnout lacked credibility -- inflated by the Soviet-style practice of vote 'collection' and illegal multiple voting.

Western diplomats and Kazakhstan's opposition have already criticised the constitution as autocratic -- democratic in form but giving the president massive discretionary powers.

The United States planned to issue a sharply worded statement in Washington later saying the constitution failed to meet accepted democratic standards, U.S. diplomats said.

The U.S. delegation to the Organisation on Security and Cooperation in Vienna -- of which Kazakhstan is a member -- was also expected to criticise Nazarbayev's bid for more power.

Ordinary Kazakhstanis accepted the result with resignation.

"I don't know any of my friends who voted -- but Nazarbayev will probably say the people of Kazakhstan voted unanimously for the new constitution," 25-year-old driver Mikhail said.

Nazarbayev was due to speak at 0730 GMT and when voting on Wednesday promised the quick passage of an election law and polls for a new twin-chamber parliament.

The vast, oil-rich former Soviet republic has been without a parliament since it was dissolved in March after elections last year were found to have been rigged.

Nazarbayev seized the chance to escape a constitutional impasse, and won a referendum in April -- by a 95 percent majority -- to extend his term until 2000.

The constitution, which will take effect when final results are published, enables Nazarbayev to dissolve parliament if it votes no-confidence in the government or twice rejects his nominee for prime minister.

The constitution also makes it possible for the president to rule by decree -- as Nazarbayev has since a constitutional crisis in the spring. He can also call for a state of emergency.

Parliament can only oust the president if he is incapacitated by illness or is found to have committed treason.

REUTER

Israel praises Kazakh steps towards democracy

RTw 8/30/95 8:09 AM

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ALMATY, Aug 30 (Reuter) - Israeli Foreign Minister Shimon Peres visited Kazakhstan on Wednesday, the day of a referendum on a new constitution, and said the young ex-Soviet state was making progress towards democracy.

"We are following with great admiration the changes that are taking place," Peres told reporters after talks with President

Nursultan Nazarbayev. "Kazakhstan is emerging from a complicated past but takes real steps to a democratic system."

Peres was in Kazakhstan for the first time in his capacity as foreign minister, but has been here before as prime minister.

Israel was quick to open embassies in the newly-independent states after the breakup of the Soviet Union in 1991. Peres said relations were warm because Kazakhstan had given refuge to many Jewish refugees in the past.

He also welcomed Kazakhstan's move to become a non-nuclear weapons state, finalised earlier this year when the country's last SS-18 nuclear missiles were removed to Russia.

Nazarbayev said he supported the Middle East peace process.

"It is directly relevant to Kazakhstan," he said, adding that calm in the region could boost international trade.

Peres and his counterpart Kasymzhomart Tokayev later signed deals on culture, tourism and cooperation between their ministries. Israel and Kazakhstan established diplomatic relations in 1992.

REUTER

The New Silk Road

APn 8/19/95 11:00 PM

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EDITOR'S NOTE: The ancient Silk Road, which linked China and Europe across the deserts and mountains of Central Asia, has been reborn since the collapse of the Soviet Union and the opening of long-sealed borders. An Associated Press reporter traveled the new Silk Road to explore the legendary trading route.

By GREG MYRE

Associated Press Writer

KHORGOS, ON THE CHINA-KAZAKHSTAN BORDER (AP) -- If the Silk Road traders of 2,000 years ago were to guide their camel caravans into the bustling new bazaars here, it wouldn't take them long to cut a deal.

The Chinese stereos, Korean televisions and Japanese cameras might baffle them, but they wouldn't miss a beat haggling over Oriental carpets, Iranian fruit and Indian sandals.

They'd soon sniff out the value of the Russian vodka, French blue jeans, counterfeit American dollars and illicit drugs, all of which began to flow when this isolated frontier was unsealed three years ago.

After an intermission that lasted centuries, the Silk Road has been reborn in the cities and towns that dot the plains of Central Asia, a region starved of consumer goods and relegated to drab, dreary poverty during Soviet rule.

"Until four years ago, no one went to the bazaars. It was only for secondhand goods," said Yerashad Israelilov, a 27-year-old Kazakh trader who was quick to capitalize when borders were thrown open after the Soviet collapse in 1991.

"Now," he said, "our whole life is a bazaar."

Khorgos, a small farming town in urgent need of a fresh coat of paint, was such a backwater that it didn't appear on many Soviet maps. And for good reason. Almost no one was allowed to use it to cross the tense Soviet-Chinese boundary.

But with Kazakhstan's independence, Khorgos suddenly emerged as the main overland trading route of the revived Silk Road, bringing a flood of Chinese goods and hints of prosperity to a long depressed region.

Set against a chain of snowcapped mountains, the new Chinese Market has hundreds of small traders offering imported goods in the Kazakh town of Zharkent (formerly Panfilov), 20 miles from the border.

Such trading outposts marked the original Silk Road, which emerged in the 2nd century B.C. as a network of routes that crisscrossed Central Asia. Silk, spices and jade went from China to Europe, and in return came gold, silver and pottery. The leading cities of Samarkand and Bukhara, both in modern-day Uzbekistan, achieved near mythic status.

In its turbulent history the region was ruled at various times by Alexander the Great, Genghis Khan and Tamerlane, resulting in a cultural goulash. The gene pool is so mixed you can find individuals with blond hair, green eyes and Asian features.

The Silk Road flourished for more than 1,000 years, but was abandoned after European sailors mastered the East-West sea routes 500 years ago. In this century, the Soviets completely cut off Central Asia from the outside world.

Since the borders reopened, Israelilov has been making two trips a week to Khorgos on the Chinese side of the border, stocking up on Chinese beer and lemon vodka, as well as clothes and sunglasses.

On his latest excursion, Israelilov filled his car with 20 boxes of cheap Chinese sunglasses along with dozens of empty boxes bearing Ray-Ban labels, highlighting the open trade in counterfeit goods.

It's a profitable business. Israelilov and his extended family still live on their Soviet-era farm which lacks running water indoors. The outhouse is in the yard next to the shed where they keep their cows, and the family has to cross the street to use the communal bath. But in the past three years, they've moved enough merchandise to buy three new cars.

While most traders still cross the endless empty deserts by road, Central Asia is open to international air traffic and there's a thriving market in chartered shopping trips.

At the airport in Kazakhstan's capital, Almaty, a plane load of impatient Kazakhs had just arrived from a shopping spree in Pakistan. There was furious pushing, shoving and shouting as passengers battled to claim their luggage -- dozens of identical plastic sacks stuffed with leather jackets, jeans, shoes, radios and televisions.

Besieged customs officials threw up their hands in despair, unable to push the oversized sacks through the airport X-ray machine.

It's a daily scene at the airport, as shoppers return from India, the United Arab Emirates and the western Chinese cities of Kashgar and Urumchi.

Still in their formative stages, the Central Asian nations are being wooed by China, Russia, Iran, Turkey and the United States, all vying for political and economic clout in a region flush with oil and other natural resources.

Nearly 100 U.S. firms have opened offices in three years, including Chevron, Citibank, IBM and AT&T.

However, prosperity has been patchy, limited mostly to strategically placed border towns such as Khorgos. Most of Central Asia remains mired in recession. Even Samarkand, the greatest Silk Road city of all, awaits a return of its long-lost glory.

The old Samarkand bazaar, set in the shadow of a crumbling 15th century mosque built by Tamerlane, is a riot of color, sounds and smells. Heavily set women with gold teeth and brightly colored head scarves sell fruits and vegetables, some cheap clothes and little else.

You won't find any of the luxuries that were on display a millennium ago. Now, you'd have to settle for a polyester track suit made in a Chinese sweat shop.

But there are traces of the old traditions. Carpet maker Mohammed Bhagishi, driven from his native Afghanistan by civil war, arrived two years ago to set up a new factory on the outskirts of Samarkand.

More than 50 women work the looms, making copies of 19th century carpets that hang on the walls. In the garden outside, mulberries, cherries and pomegranates are waiting to be picked and tossed into giant vats to produce the natural colors found in the finer carpets.

"They used to make beautiful carpets here, but they forgot how," said Bhagishi. "We will teach them once again."

End Advance Sunday Aug, 20

Kazakhstan tames inflation but still has far to go

RTw 8/17/95 3:58 AM

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By Janet Guttman

ALMATY, Aug 17 (Reuter) - Kazakhstan has brought inflation sharply down this year but must remodel its economy on Western lines if reform is to succeed, Kazakh and Western officials said on Thursday.

"We have more or less achieved macroeconomic stabilisation, in relative terms," Deputy Central Bank Head Grigory Marchenko said in an interview, pointing to lower inflation rates, a stable currency and a steep rise in foreign exchange reserves.

He added: "But we are lagging behind very much on structural reform at the enterprise level."

Western bankers in the Kazakh capital Almaty agree that the central bank has been the driving force behind economic reforms so far, keeping monetary policy tight and bringing monthly inflation down to low single figures.

But there has been little restructuring of Soviet-era industry and

most big firms are still in state hands. Output is falling, companies do not pay their debts and investors are scared away by frequently changing laws.

Economy Minister Altai Tleubeldin said the "period of romanticism" for foreign investors had been replaced by a more pragmatic outlook.

"The time for romanticism has gone -- the belief that Kazakhstan is a profitable place to invest, that Kazakhstan has very rich natural resources and that each investor can find very profitable conditions," he said.

Marchenko said he expected August inflation to fall below two percent from 2.9 percent in July. Monthly inflation was 46 percent in June 1994, but in June it hit a post-independence low of 2.3 percent.

"The central bank is the best institution in Kazakhstan," said Paul Maxwell, general manager of ABN-Amro bank in Almaty.

But the central bank's policies have won few friends in the ailing industrial sector, which is finding it hard to cope with partners who do not pay their bills and goods designed in Soviet times for a captive undemanding market.

Tleubeldin said tight budgetary constraints meant he had been allocated just 1.5 billion tenge (\$25 million) of seven billion (\$117 million) promised for state investment in 1995.

"We are not able to create a serious basis for stabilising production," he said.

He expected gross domestic product to fall by 15 percent this year, after a slump of 25 percent in 1994. A further fall of eight or 10 percent was likely in 1996, he added.

But economists say the fall in output is not the main problem facing Kazakhstan, a landlocked country the size of Western Europe sandwiched between Russia and China.

Instead they complain about top-level corruption and inconsistent privatisation policies.

No end in sight to Kazakh economic decline

RTw 8/16/95 7:57 AM

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ALMATY, Aug 16 (Reuter) - Kazakhstan's economy will contract by 15 percent this year and a further fall of up to 10 percent is likely

in 1996, Economy Minister Altai Tleyuberdin said on Wednesday.

"We cannot stop the fall in 1996," Tleyuberdin said in an interview. "The decline will be eight or 10 percent."

Kazakh economic output halved in the three years following independence, but latest monthly data show small increases.

Gross domestic product rose by 4.7 percent in July from June, but was still 13.9 percent below year-ago levels.

Tleyuberdin said problems facing the Kazakh economy included cumbersome bureaucracy, chronic non-payment of debts, unfinished legislation and a Soviet-era mentality of depending on the state for handouts.

Would-be investors in Kazakhstan should look for a niche in the domestic market, rather than simply assume that easy profits were there for the taking, the minister said.

"The time for romanticism has gone -- the belief that Kazakhstan is a profitable place to invest, that Kazakhstan has very rich natural resources, and that each investor can find very profitable conditions," he said.

Turkey opens \$300 mln credit line to Kazakhstan

RTw 8/15/95 3:53 AM

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ALMATY, Aug 15 (Reuter) - Turkish Premier Tansu Ciller, in Almaty on the first stop of a three-nation Central Asian tour, concluded four deals on Tuesday with Kazakhstan and opened a \$300 million credit line to the former Soviet republic.

The deals covered a tax treaty, cooperation in the fight against crime, animal husbandry and agriculture. More important was the \$300 million in Turkish Eximbank credits to promote investment projects in Kazakhstan.

"Turkey has already invested two billion dollars in construction in Kazakhstan -- we want to increase that to four or five billion in a couple of years," Ciller told reporters.

Also in the works is an agreement on cooperation on finding a pipeline route to western markets for Kazakh oil exports. Ciller said an agreement would be signed later in the day.

After completing her visit to Kazakhstan, Ciller goes on to neighbouring Kyrgyzstan and then to Turkmenistan.

REUTER

Kazakhstan denies selling uranium to Libya

RTw 8/10/95 9:48 AM

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ALMATY, Aug 10 (Reuter) - Kazakhstan denied on Thursday that it had any plans to sell uranium to Libya and rejected a report by the Libyan news agency JANA that such a sale would go ahead.

"Kazakhstan has not been approached by Libya, and we are not prepared to sell nuclear fuel to Libya," Ergali Bayadilov, head of the ex-Soviet republic's Atomic Energy Agency, told Reuters.

Kazakhstan has a quarter of the world's uranium reserves and produces 80 percent of the nuclear fuel used in atomic reactors across the former Soviet Union.

But Kazakhstan has shut down its Semipalatinsk nuclear test range, scene of nearly 500 blasts under Soviet rule, shipped its SS-18 nuclear missiles to Russia and signed the nuclear non-proliferation treaty.

"Kazakhstan strictly observes the terms of the nuclear non-proliferation treaty, which it joined as a non-nuclear weapons

state," the Atomic Energy Agency said in a statement.

The statement added that under a safeguards agreement with the International Atomic Energy Agency, ratified by President Nursultan Nazarbayev in June, all nuclear material on the territory of Kazakhstan is under state control.

"At this time Kazakhstan is not holding any negotiations with Libya about possible deliveries of uranium," the statement concluded.

The JANA report said Libya would purchase "amounts" of radioactive uranium under a cooperation framework between the two countries.

REUTER

Kazakhstan-Vaccine Deaths

APn 7/12/95 12:22 PM

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ALMATY, Kazakhstan (AP) -- Three children died after they were injected with a measles vaccine provided by the United Nations Children's Fund, a news agency reported Wednesday.

In Geneva, a spokesman for the U.N. World Health Organization said a toxic ingredient apparently had gotten into the vaccine, causing blood clotting that killed the children in the northern city of Kustanai.

The vaccine is a powder that has to be mixed with certain fluids before it can be injected, spokesman Thomson Prentice explained. Bacteria can form in vials of vaccine that have been open too long, and another danger is that the syringe used to inject the vaccine contained other drugs, Prentice said.

WHO will have the vaccine samples tested and examine autopsy samples, he said.

Kazakh health authorities have ordered all further vaccination suspended. It was not immediately known when the children died.

Kazakhstan president promotes justice minister

RTw 7/5/95 2:26 AM

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ALMATY, July 5 (Reuter) - Kazakhstan President Nursultan Nazarbayev has promoted Justice Minister Nagashbai Shaikenov to the rank of deputy prime minister, according to a decree published in official newspapers on Wednesday.

Shaikenov, who also retains the post of justice minister, helped write a draft constitution on which the Central Asian country is expected to hold a referendum in August.

REUTER

Kazakhstan leader promotes draft constitution

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By Douglas Busvine

ALMATY, July 4 (Reuter) - Kazakhstan President Nursultan Nazarbayev's drive to promote a new constitution got into top gear on Tuesday as he called the draft, which would give him sweeping powers, a document "for all the people of Kazakhstan."

"I am the initiator and author of this constitution," he told reporters. But he added he was open to proposals which would promote development and harmony in the ex-Soviet republic.

Nazarbayev has called a month of public debate on the draft, to be followed by a referendum in August, and is set to emerge with his powers enhanced after a recent constitutional crisis.

In March, the Constitutional Court ruled elections a year earlier illegal. Parliament was dissolved, Nazarbayev assumed special powers to rule by decree, and then won a referendum to extend his term to the year 2000 with a 95 percent majority.

The draft constitution gives the president the power to dissolve a new two-chamber parliament.

He nominates the prime minister, with parliament's approval, but if the legislature objects the president can call elections. The same applies if parliament passes a no-confidence vote against the government.

Other key points of the constitution also strengthen the president's powers:

- The president may be impeached, but it would take a three-quarters majority at a joint session of parliament to do so.

- Usually, the president may not initiate legislation, but parliament can award special lawmaking powers to the president for up to a year by a two-thirds majority at a joint session.

- The president nominates seven members of the 47-member Senate, the upper house of the new parliament.

Nazarbayev, a 54-year-old former Soviet politburo member, answered Western criticism that the draft is too autocratic by saying it is at least as democratic as the French model.

But he did drop one clause from an initial version absolving the president of responsibility for his official actions.

The constitution rules on a series of sensitive issues vital for maintaining stability in Kazakhstan -- a resource-rich state of 17 million stretching from the Caspian Sea to China where Slavs roughly equal ethnic Kazakhs in number.

The country will be called both Kazakhstan and the Kazakh Republic -- seen as a concession to indigenous Kazakhs. Kazakh retains its status as the state language, while Russian, the lingua franca, is the official tongue.

The constitution says farmland will not be privatised, also a key issue for the mainly rural Kazakhs, and bars the holding of dual citizenship.

"If people have dual citizenship it means we will have first and second class citizens," Nazarbayev said.

Kazakh leader wins poll, says I'm no dictator

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(Adds further quotes by Nazarbayev, opposition criticism)

By Richard Balmforth

ALMA-ATA, April 30 (Reuter) - Kazakhstan's President Nursultan Nazarbayev announced on Sunday he had won sweeping endorsement by the people to stay in power in his vast, oil-rich territory into the 21st century.

Announcing an overwhelming victory in a Saturday referendum, the 54-year-old leader rejected opposition criticism of dictatorial behaviour and pledged not to depart from democracy.

"The people have said a decisive 'no' to unneeded trouble and big tremors (in society)," Nazarbayev declared in a statement read out at a news conference where he said he had received 95.4 percent of the vote.

Committing himself to a full liberalisation course, he vowed to improve the economy and to crack down on crime. Elections to a new two-chamber parliament would be held this year, he said.

"We'll not depart from the path of democratic transformations."

Opposition parties condemned the result as fraudulent.

Alexandra Dokuchayeva, head of the pro-Slav movement Lad which urged its members to vote "no," said Lad's observers had recorded innumerable cases of multiple voting.

"This figure of 95 percent reminds one of Soviet-era elections," she said. She questioned the high turnout figure of over 90 percent. "These figures do not correspond to reality."

Underscoring the displeasure of Western governments, diplomats from the G7 group of industrialised nations boycotted Nazarbayev's official announcement of the result, which had been regarded by observers as a foregone conclusion.

The outcome leaves Nazarbayev in undisputed control of a vast territory stretching from the Caspian Sea to China.

The former communist party boss, who became the first national leader after his ex-Soviet state declared independence, should have faced presidential polls in December 1996.

The nine million voters had been asked to vote "yes" or "no" on extending Nazarbayev's tenure to December 2000. He called the referendum a month ago amid a constitutional crisis when he allowed parliament to collapse and has since ruled by decree.

At the Sunday news conference, Nazarbayev dismissed charges by the political opposition that he was acting in a dictatorial manner. "Talk of a dictatorship is absolutely baseless and irresponsible. The very word scares us," he said.

The United States, which until recently strongly backed Nazarbayev because of his capitalist reforms and his readiness to scrap Soviet-era nuclear weapons, has been highly critical of the referendum, calling it a step back from democracy.

Nazarbayev said a quick transition from being a Soviet republic to a full democracy had never been possible.

"You'll be able to judge (us) by the practical steps which we will undertake in the future after the referendum," he said in a remark

clearly angled at Western criticism.

He said moves would go ahead to organise another referendum on changes to the constitution which would include private land ownership and upgrading of the status of the Russian language.

The latter is seen as vital for calming post-independence fears among the ethnic Russians -- 36 percent of the 17 million population and the backbone of heavy industry in the north.

Nazarbayev is the third leader in Central Asia to extend tenure in office by referendum. Uzbekistan's hardline leader Islam Karimov had his mandate prolonged to the end of 2000 while Turkmenistan's Saparmurad Niyazov will now rule until 2002.

REUTER

Kazakh president polls 95 percent

UPn 4/30/95 5:47 AM

MOSCOW, April 30 (UPI) -- Kazakhstan's President Nursultan Nazarbayev won more than 95 percent of the vote in a referendum on extending his term until the year 2000 without elections, preliminary results showed Sunday.

Nazarbayev, a former Communist who also ran the Central Asian republic before the breakup of the Soviet Union, said the extended term would bring political stability that would allow him to broaden reforms.

The referendum, called by Nazarbayev as an alternative to scheduled presidential elections in 1996, has been criticized as a return to the non-democratic plebiscites of the Soviet era in which Communist candidates routinely won nearly 100 percent support while running unopposed.

Preliminary results from Saturday's referendum, released Sunday by the Central Referendum Commission in the Kazakh capital Amaty, showed that 91.26 percent of the nearly nine million eligible voters cast ballots, of which Nazarbayev won 95.46 percent.

Final official results were to be released later in the week.

The state boosted turnout Saturday by supplying polling stations with

supplies of food and clothing offered to voters at discounted prices. At Election Station No. 146 in Amaty, tomatoes were selling at two-thirds the market price and children eyed bales of Moscow-produced candy that had all but disappeared from Kazakh shops since the Soviet breakup.

In recent weeks, the state has also made good on pensions and wages owed to thousands of state sector workers and retirees who had gone unpaid for months.

The referendum -- suggested by a group of pro-Nazarbayev politicians shortly after the Kazakh leader dissolved Parliament last month -- was criticized by foreign leaders and a weak domestic political opposition as the latest step in moves away from democracy in Kazakhstan and other Central Asian republics.

But Nazarbayev and his supporters say dissolution of Parliament and the referendum will allow him to enact legislation improving the struggling economy of the resource-rich state without waiting for approval of lawmakers.

In the month since he dissolved Parliament, Nazarbayev has passed a 1995 budget for Kazakhstan and made changes in the

criminal code allowing for a highly visible anti-crime campaign that has likely improved his image as a champion of security and stability.

Nazarbayev is the third leader in former Soviet Central Asia to hold a vote extending his powers into the 21st century.

Iron-handed Turkmenistan President Saparmurad Niyazov led the pack with a successful referendum last year, and Uzbekistan President Islam Karimov followed with a similar move last month, reaping 99.6 percent support, according to official counting.

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Mobil signs oil deal in Kazakhstan

RTw 4/17/95 6:43 AM

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ALMA-ATA, April 17 (Reuter) - U.S. oil giant Mobil Corp and Kazakhstan on Monday agreed to establish a joint venture that will invest at least \$80 million in exploring for oil in the former Soviet republic.

The agreement, signed during a visit by Mobil Chief Executive Officer Lucio Noto, called for exploration work to be carried out over five years in the western Atyrau and northwestern Aktyubinsk areas of Kazakhstan.

Company representatives, attending the signing ceremony, told reporters that if significant reserves were discovered, investment in a subsequent 25-year production phase could rise to several billion dollars.

The Kazakh partners in the 50-50 Tulpar-Munai Ltd joint venture are three state-owned enterprises -- Poisk, Tulpar and Aktyubinskneft.

The agreement coincided with a visit to Alma-Ata by U.S. Deputy Energy Secretary Bill White, who signed a joint declaration on cooperation in energy policy with Kazakhstan.

U.S. diplomats attending talks between White and Kazakh Prime Minister Akezhan Kazhegeldin said one of the main issues discussed was oil transport systems from Kazakhstan, which currently depends on Russia's export pipeline system.

Chevron Corp's Tengizchevroil joint venture, developing the giant Tengiz field in the west of the republic, is holding back output due to a lack of adequate export access.

Kazakh officials said a southern route through Turkey was being considered, although Russia wants any new pipelines to cross its territory.

White told reporters that U.S. companies working in Kazakhstan would play a major role in plans to boost Kazakhstan's export capacity. He gave no details of any proposals to secure financing for new pipelines.

REUTER

Central Asian leaders urge action on Tajikistan

RTw 4/14/95 10:33 AM

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CHIMKENT, Kazakhstan, April 14 (Reuter) - Leaders from three Central Asian states called on Friday for urgent action to quell fighting in Tajikistan and proposed that peace talks be held in the Kazakh capital Alma-Ata.

The presidents of Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan, meeting here for a one-day summit, echoed a call by Russian President Boris Yeltsin to boost defences against attacks by rebel forces on the Tajik-Afghan frontier.

"The development of events demands urgent measures to prevent an escalation of the fighting on the Tajik-Afghan border," Uzbek leader Islam Karimov said after the talks.

Karimov, Nursultan Nazarbayev of Kazakhstan and Askar Akayev of Kyrgyzstan said a peaceful settlement of the conflict should be achieved under the auspices of the United Nations at talks in Alma-Ata. No date was fixed for the talks.

All three countries, acutely aware of the risk the fighting poses to the region's stability, have contributed troops to a 25,000-strong Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) force which has guarded the border since 1992.

Fighting has flared up in the past week in Gorno-Badakhshan, eastern Tajikistan, after rebel forces based there allied with Afghan-based Islamic militants to try and wrest control of the isolated region.

Of 41 border troops killed in the fighting 17 were from Kazakhstan.

Karimov said he was actively involved in mediation efforts between the Tajik opposition and the U.N. "We still have political chances to achieve an international resolution of this problem," he told reporters.

The leaders also agreed to deepen economic cooperation up to the year 2000 and said they planned to set up an Association of Central Asian states -- which could later be extended to include Turkmenistan, Tajikistan and Azerbaijan.

Karimov and Akayev also said they would consider bringing Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan into a customs union set up earlier this year by Russia, Kazakhstan and Belarus.

REUTER

Central Asian leaders urge action on Tajikistan

RTw 4/14/95 10:33 AM

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REUTER

Kazakh president to proceed with referendum

RTw 4/5/95 10:40 AM

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(Includes fresh Perry quotes, arrival in Uzbekistan)

By Charles Aldinger

ALMA-ATA, April 5 (Reuter) - Kazakh President Nursultan Nazarbayev, rejecting U.S. criticism, on Wednesday said he would go ahead with a public referendum this month on extending his presidency until 2000.

"Why should people dictate to us how we should behave if we are behaving exactly the way our constitution is written?" Nazarbayev told reporters following talks with visiting U.S. Defence Secretary William Perry.

The United States has praised the former Soviet republic for agreeing to give up nuclear weapons but Perry and other U.S. officials are concerned about Nazarbayev's decision to call the referendum on April 29.

Presidential elections had been scheduled for next year but Nazarbayev, who disbanded parliament in March after Kazakhstan's constitutional court declared a March 1994 parliamentary election illegal, now says a poll would be too disruptive.

"I decided to appeal and turn to the people who elected me. Let them show us what they really want," he told a news conference after he and Perry discussed closer defence and economic ties between Washington and Alma-Ata.

Perry said he had discussed the referendum as well as other matters with Nazarbayev and was pleased at improving relations between the two countries. But he stressed that "there are some areas where we are not in agreement..."

"The key to democracy, history shows us, is free, fair and pluralistic elections," he told a separate news conference.

Until now, Washington has seen Nazarbayev as one of the most progressive of the leaders of former Soviet republics, largely due to his cooperation in ridding Kazakhstan of nuclear weapons and his commitment to a free market economy.

Perry had earlier emerged from talks with Nazarbayev to tell reporters the Kazakh chief had reaffirmed he was committed to moving his country towards democracy.

Another senior U.S. official, who asked not to be identified, noted

Nazarbayev visited Washington in 1992 and again last year when he promised President Bill Clinton to move ahead with democratic reforms in this oil-producing country.

"If we see in Kazakhstan a narrowing and constricting of the political process rather than the opposite, it will over time cause a reduction in confidence," added the official.

Kazakhstan -- strategically located between Russia and China -- has already shipped its nuclear bombs and cruise missiles back to Russia and has deactivated all of its 10-warhead SS-18 nuclear missiles.

Most of those warheads have also been shipped to Russia for disposal.

Perry also met Defence Minister Sagadat Nurmagambetov on closer military ties, including future joint exercises and exchanges of officers.

Perry arrived in Tashkent, capital of Uzbekistan, later on Wednesday for talks on Thursday with President Islam Karimov. He earlier visited Ukraine and Russia and will fly home to Washington late on Thursday.

Washington has provided a total of \$170 million in aid to help Kazakhstan dismantle its nuclear arsenal.

Perry announced on Monday an additional \$37 million in joint investment projects to convert the sprawling former Soviet defence industry in Kazakhstan.

REUTER

Kazakh president forms crime-fighting council

RTw 4/5/95 5:10 AM

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ALMA-ATA, April 5 (Reuter) - Kazakh president Nursultan Nazarbayev formed a new council on Wednesday to coordinate a crackdown on crime and corruption in his former Soviet republic.

A decree published in the official media said the 16-member council included Prime Minister Akezhan Kazhegeldin and other senior government representatives.

Nazarbayev launched the anti-crime drive last month after disbanding parliament and taking on special executive powers. That move followed a ruling by the Constitutional Court that elections held last year in Kazakhstan were illegal.

The president's opponents have accused him of seeking to concentrate power in his own hands, citing in evidence a referendum called for April 29 on extending his term of office until the year 2000.

Nazarbayev denies any departure from democratic principles, and his supporters view the referendum as a chance to ensure stability and implement economic reforms. Nazarbayev's current term expires in December 1996.

Diplomats say the efforts to combat worsening crime could boost the president's popularity ahead of the referendum.

Perry surveys remains of Russian bombers

UPn 4/4/95 12:05 PM

By JOHN ROPER

ENGELS AIRBASE, Russia, April 4 (UPI) -- Defense Secretary William Perry saw the Cold War fade further into the past Tuesday as he surveyed the scattered remains of dozens of Russian bomber planes, built to deliver nuclear payloads and destroyed by their creators.

Perry, who arrived at Engels Airbase early in the day after wrapping up two days of talks in Moscow, toured the aircraft "boneyard" where nearly 100 Russian TU-95 "Bear" bomber planes have been dismantled as part of an arms reduction accord.

The Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty calls for both the United States and former Soviet Union to reduce nuclear weapons bombers and launchers to agreed-upon numbers.

Perry said both the United States and Russia are ahead of schedule in START 1 weapons depletions, each about 40 percent into goals set by the accord.

"We were, during the Cold War, in lockstep in producing weapons," Perry said. "Now we are in lockstep in dismantling them."

Perry is on a weeklong trip to the former Soviet states in large part to show his support for the accord.

He left Moscow early Tuesday and stopped about six hours at Engels as the Pentagon chief entered the final leg of his trip, which takes him to Almaty, Kazakhstan, and, later, Uzbekistan.

Perry plans meeting with officials in Almaty Wednesday on defense conversion issues.

At Engels, about 500 miles southeast of Moscow, there are 125 START-accountable Russian "bears" slated to be taken apart.

Of those, Russian workers have chopped 75 into scrap metal, with another 18 reconfigured to prohibit the planes from delivering nuclear payloads.

"I am very much satisfied with what I have seen," Perry said of

Russia's progress. "What is going on at this base is reducing the risk of war."

Russian workers have been tearing up the aircraft for nearly two years, but "in theory they should have been only doing this for three months," Perry said.

He said the addition of U.S. equipment, including a type of "guillotine" used to slice off the wings of the planes, will help workers significantly increase their pace.

"This is probably the best use for which a guillotine has ever been put," he joked.

Officials traveling with Perry said the device could "de-wing" two to three planes a day.

The guillotine is attached to the end of a crane and dropped onto the wings, shearing them to the tarmac.

"It cuts like them like a knife going through butter," base commander Col. Vladimir Kurchanikov told Perry while giving him a tour.

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Kazakh opposition sees danger of totalitarian rule

RTw 4/4/95 10:39 AM

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ALMA-ATA, April 4 (Reuter) - Opposition leaders in Kazakhstan on Tuesday said a referendum this month on extending President Nursultan Nazarbayev's term of office to the year 2000 was a threat to democracy and appealed for a massive "no" vote.

Nazarbayev called for the referendum last month. He was urged to do so by leaders of ethnic groups who see the 56-year-old leader as a guarantor of peace and stability and the only man capable of carrying out economic reforms.

"A real danger has emerged of one man, the president, seizing power," said an appeal by a group of opposition politicians, including some former members of the recently disbanded parliament.

"We call on all voters to go to the polls on April 29 and cast their ballots against extending the powers of the president until the year 2000," said the appeal, a copy of which was obtained by Reuters.

The poll comes hard on the heels of a constitutional crisis last month when Nazarbayev disbanded parliament after elections last year were ruled illegal by the constitutional court.

Nazarbayev has since taken on special executive powers and launched a crackdown on crime.

Kazakhstan, a vast former Soviet republic stretching from the Caspian Sea to the Chinese border, has attracted hundreds of millions of dollars in foreign investment in its oil and gas sector and billions more are likely under new deals.

Nazarbayev backers say the country cannot afford disruptive elections in 1996, when his current term is due to expire.

The opposition groups said the referendum could be rigged,

although international observers are expected to monitor the vote and Nazarbayev has trumpeted it as a test for his commitment to democracy.

He is due to make a whistle-stop tour of Kazakh regions in the run-up to the poll. It follows a similar vote last month in Uzbekistan that gave hardline leader Islam Karimov unanimous backing for staying in office until the end of the century.

REUTER

Perry to see disarmament in action at Russia base

RTw 4/3/95 5:25 PM

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By Charles Aldinger

MOSCOW, April 4 (Reuter) - U.S. Defence Secretary William Perry is due to see disarmament in action on Tuesday when he witnesses the destruction of a Russian bomber to meet nuclear arms reduction deals.

Perry is to stop at Engels Air Base south of Moscow on his way to the Kazakh capital Alma-Ata. He will tour a facility set up to dismantle nuclear bombers, a key part of the Soviet military arsenal during the Cold War.

The U.S. minister is on a trip to improve military ties with four former Soviet republics. He has already visited Ukraine and will end his trip in Uzbekistan later this week.

Yet Perry was disappointed on Monday when Russian leaders rejected a U.S. appeal to Moscow to cancel plans to sell nuclear reactors to Iran.

"The Russian government did not agree to change their position to proceed with that sale," Perry told a news conference after meetings with top Russian officials.

Washington fears that Tehran might use spent fuel from such reactors to develop nuclear weapons. But, according to Perry, Russian Prime Minister Viktor Chernomyrdin expressed confidence that tight safeguards could prevent that.

"I told him (Chernomyrdin) I did not share that confidence," he said of the nuclear fuel safeguards issue, but added that Russian and U.S. experts would continue talks on the matter in the coming weeks.

Perry and Russian officials signed new agreements under which Washington is to provide an additional \$40 million to Russia to help safeguard and destroy nuclear weapons.

The two countries also agreed to hold joint military peacekeeping exercises next autumn in the United States.

Russian Defence Minister Pavel Grachev, speaking on another point of contention between Washington and Moscow, warned against quick NATO expansion into eastern European nations, saying such a move would isolate Russia from its neighbours.

He said Moscow might take "counter measures," including a refusal to abide by the 1990 treaty on conventional forces in Europe (CFE). That treaty places tight controls on numbers and placements of troops and armour in Europe.

REUTER

Two Kazakhs--man of steel against man of letters

RTw 3/14/95 9:52 AM

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By Douglas Busvine

ALMA-ATA, March 14 (Reuter) - Kazakhstan's constitutional crisis is pitting against each other two figures, the state president and the leader of a group of rebel deputies, whose political paths are closely intertwined.

President Nursultan Nazarbayev, 55, started his career as a steel worker in the giant Karaganda metallurgical works, and rose through the local Communist Party ranks to become party leader in 1989 and a Soviet Politburo member a year later.

His chief opponent in the current crisis, 59-year-old writer Olzhas Suleimenov, is regarded by many as the product of Nazarbayev's toleration of a tame opposition in the dying years of the Soviet Union.

Nazarbayev did nothing to stop Suleimenov when the latter, then a deputy in the union-wide Supreme Soviet, founded the Nevada-Semipalatinsk movement to protest at above-ground nuclear tests in northern Kazakhstan.

The movement took its name from the locations of the main U.S. and Soviet test sites.

Observers said Nazarbayev was looking to create an outlet for nationalist tensions in a country where ethnic Kazakhs -- former nomads speaking a Turkic language -- roughly equal Slavs in Kazakhstan's population of 17 million.

Kazakhstan, the size of Western Europe, was a Soviet dumping ground not only for troublesome ethnic groups -- such as the Chechens whom dictator Josef Stalin deported there wholesale -- but also for the most polluting industries.

"Kazakhstan was just a junk heap where Russia threw all its garbage," Suleimenov said in 1990.

His movement funnelled popular opposition and nationalist sentiment against Soviet rule and crystallised in 1992 into a broad-based political party -- the People's Congress.

The two continued to enjoy close relations but, Suleimenov said in an interview on Tuesday, he fell out of sympathy with Nazarbayev's economic reforms last autumn and last weekend's dissolution of parliament pushed him into outright opposition.

Both ethnic Kazakhs, Nazarbayev and Suleimenov are very different characters -- the president a smooth but tough leader comfortable on the world stage, while long-haired Suleimenov is regarded as a Bohemian.

Both were proteges of long-time Kazakh Communist Party leader Dinmukhamed Kunayev, who ran the country for 25 years until 1986. He died only last year.

Kunayev made Nazarbayev one of Kazakhstan's youngest top officials, in charge of industry, in 1979.

Despite adamantly opposing the breakup of the Soviet Union, Nazarbayev emerged as the undisputed leader of independent Kazakhstan. But he remains a champion of integration, recently

signing a customs union with Russia and Belarus and missing no opportunity to promote his scheme for a "Euro-Asian Union."

Kunayev shielded Suleimenov from a welter of criticism after the publication in the 1970s of his book "Az i ya" -- whose thesis that Russian language and culture were drawn from Turkic roots caused uproar in Soviet literary circles.

Nazarbayev and Suleimenov met last Saturday at an emergency session of parliament which failed to persuade Nazarbayev to sign an act suspending the Constitutional Court -- whose ruling that 1994 elections were illegal caused parliament's fall.

The two may meet again when opposition ex-deputies put their case against their dismissal in the next few days.

With presidential elections due in 1996, the outcome of the clash between executive and legislature will be vital in determining whether Suleimenov emerges as a viable candidate to run against Nazarbayev.

REUTER

Kazakh deputies defy dissolution by Nazarbayev

RTw 3/14/95 6:35 AM

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(adds details, new ministerial appointments)

By Douglas Busvine

ALMA-ATA, March 14 (Reuter) - A majority of deputies from Kazakhstan's disbanded parliament met on Tuesday and vowed to fight a dissolution order by President Nursultan Nazarbayev but made clear they did not seek a confrontation with him.

A group of 130 deputies from the 177-seat chamber, meeting in the parliament building, unanimously passed a motion contesting a constitutional court ruling that the legislature was illegitimate.

Nazarbayev dissolved parliament over the weekend, saying he had to bow to the court's decision.

But deputies accuse the president of using the ruling -- which said parliamentary elections last year were flawed -- to rid himself of a problem legislature and rule by decree.

"The executive and judicial powers have taken revenge on parliament," writer and anti-nuclear campaigner Olzhas Suleimenov, who led the rebel deputies, said after the meeting.

Suleimenov told journalists he wanted international arbitration to get Kazakhstan out of its constitutional impasse. "It is serious. It may be our most serious crisis," he added.

Suleimenov, Kazakhstan's main opposition figure, won recognition in the Soviet Union and the West when he led a campaign to stop nuclear testing at the Semipalatinsk site. He is expected to stand in presidential elections due in 1996.

Despite deputies' strong criticism, they stepped back from open confrontation with Nazarbayev, a widely respected figure in the Commonwealth of Independent States and in the West despite his communist past.

They dropped the tag of "alternative assembly" and said they would present a legal case to Nazarbayev to persuade him the constitutional court ruling was groundless.

"We understand the situation people are in. We don't want to exacerbate the situation. We understand that if there is a flare-up Kazakhstan could be in danger," Suleimenov said.

The deputies said the irregularities in the 1994 poll referred to by the court applied to one electoral district, not to the whole ballot.

Suleimenov said deputies had been locked out of their offices and their phone lines cut, but would continue to meet -- at his People's Congress party headquarters if necessary.

Top officials and a hard core of 42 deputies loyal to the president did not join the meeting. Nazarbayev told journalists on Monday there was no hurry to hold parliamentary elections.

The crisis represents one of first real challenges to Nazarbayev's authority since Kazakhstan became independent from the Soviet Union in 1991.

A former communist politburo member in Soviet times, Nazarbayev, 55, kept his grip on power after independence.

Under his leadership, Kazakhstan has allowed foreign oil and gas companies to sign lucrative deals to exploit its colossal energy resources.

Western investors said they saw no cause for concern for now, provided Nazarbayev remained in charge to implement his economic reforms.

Prime Minister Akezhan Kazhegeldin, now heading a caretaker government, announced his first ministerial appointments. Vitaly Mette was promoted to first deputy prime minister, replacing Nigmatzhan Isingar, moved down a rung to deputy premier.

REUTER

Rebel Kazakh deputies to open own assembly

RTw 3/13/95 5:25 PM

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By Douglas Busvine

ALMA-ATA, March 14 (Reuter) - Rebel members of Kazakhstan's parliament, dissolved by President Nursultan Nazarbayev, plan to hold the first sitting of their alternative assembly on Tuesday to denounce what they say is a drift to totalitarianism.

Seventy members of the dissolved 177-seat parliament said they would join the rebel group. The rest were apparently resigned to last weekend's move by Nazarbayev and his pledge to rule by decree pending a new election.

Led by one of Kazakhstan's best-known public figures and writers, Olzhas Suleimenov, the rebels pledged they would do everything to prevent violence erupting over any possible confrontation between president and parliament.

"Our regime is becoming a fascist regime," deputy Nurbakit Kuashybekov told Reuters. "Every totalitarian regime ends in violence. That is the path we want to avoid. We want to work legally, but we fear the security forces."

Kuashybekov said politicians of all persuasions had joined the rebel group, likely to become the chief vehicle for opposition to Nazarbayev's administration when an election is called.

Suleimenov's leadership will give it prominence. He won recognition in the Soviet Union and the West when he led a campaign to stop nuclear testing at Kazakhstan's Semipalatinsk site.

Nazarbayev told local journalists there was no hurry to hold an election. "Time for reflection" was needed, a presidential spokesman said.

The president dissolved parliament after the constitutional court in the second largest former Soviet republic ruled that last year's general election was illegal.

Most Kazakhs appeared to take the news calmly. The streets of the capital Alma-Ata were quiet as temperatures plunged below freezing.

Officials said the parliament chamber was "closed for renovations."

Western investors in the energy-rich country said they did not see any need for concern at present provided Nazarbayev remained in charge to implement his economic reforms.

"I don't think that we feel insecure, but we're observing," said Bob Williams of Tengizchevroil, in which U.S. oil firm Chevron has a 50 percent stake.

Nazarbayev, 55, a former Communist Party leader who won a 1991 election with 99.8 percent of the vote, has denied he wants to take power into his own hands.

He reappointed Akezhan Kazhegeldin as prime minister to form a caretaker government, which could be in place within a week.

Constitutional disputes between president and parliament have erupted in several former Soviet republics.

Russian President Boris Yeltsin's dissolution of his parliament led to confrontation in October 1993 when tanks blasted hardline deputies barricaded in their chamber.

Nazarbayev's actions are tame compared to what has happened in adjacent Central Asian states emerging from Soviet rule with little tradition of real democracy.

In Uzbekistan, parliament largely rubber stamps the decisions of President Islam Karimov, as does the legislature in Turkmenistan under President Saparmurat Niyazov.

Tajikistan's President Imamali Rakhmonov, a former communist, was re-elected recently, but foreign observers said the presidential and parliamentary polls were staged unfairly.

REUTER

AP Industry News

APn 1/30/95 2:48 PM

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A summary of developments in the news industry for the week of Jan. 23-30:

Appeals Court Upholds Ruling that Reporters Aren't Professionals

BOSTON (AP) -- An appeals court rejected a newspaper's claim that most of its reporters, editors and photographers need not be paid overtime under federal law because they are professionals.

The Jan. 24 ruling by the 1st U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals affirmed a lower court decision in the case of the Concord (N.H.) Monitor.

The key issue for the appeals court was how much weight to give to 45-year-old U.S. Labor Department policy that to be ineligible for overtime a journalist's primary duties must require "invention, imagination or talent." The policy says such journalists generally are editorial writers, columnists, critics and "top flight" writers of analytical and interpretive articles."

The trial court used the policy despite the Monitor's claims it was "outdated, inconsistent with other agency pronouncements and (contained) vague and undefined terms."

In November 1993, U.S. District Judge Shane Devine ordered the Monitor to pay a total of almost \$21,000 to 10 reporters and two photographers.

The Monitor decision is at odds with one last month in a federal court in Washington. In that case, federal Judge Norma Holloway Johnson ruled that a former Washington Post reporter was "an artistic professional" whose primary duty consisted of "work requiring invention, imagination and talent." The reporter therefore was exempt from overtime provisions, the judge said.

That reporter, Tom Sherwood, filed an appeal Jan. 26, according to his lawyer, Robert E. Paul. He said the Boston ruling demonstrates "the district court here made a legally erroneous decision in its application of the Fair Labor Standards Act."

In the Monitor case, the Labor Department sought nearly \$90,000 in overtime for work performed between 1978 and 1980.

George Wilson, president of the Monitor's parent company, Newspapers of New England, said he was disappointed by the decision.

"We have believed for years that reporters' work requires a high level of professional skill and independence," Wilson said. He also noted the contrary ruling in the Post case.

"In our experience, the nature of the work does not differ materially in large and smaller newspapers," he said.

Wilson said Wednesday he was not sure whether he would appeal.

Chuck Dale, president of The Newspaper Guild, said he was pleased.

"All reporters approach their jobs professionally. But to try to hide behind that and try to avoid paying them overtime is despicable," Dale said from the union's headquarters in Silver Spring, Md.

Nebraska Court Rules Carrier Should Get Workers' Compensation

OMAHA, Neb. (AP) -- A girl struck by a car while delivering newspapers was an employee and entitled to worker's compensation and more than \$1 million in medical costs, a Nebraska appellate court ruled.

Attorneys for the Fremont Tribune and Jennifer Larson differed on whether the 3-0 ruling Jan. 24 would affect the newspaper industry in Nebraska.

Tribune publisher Jim Holland said he expects the paper to ask

the Nebraska Supreme Court to review the case.

The decision means Jennifer is entitled to \$84.97 in weekly workers' compensation benefits and more than \$1 million in medical costs, said her attorney, Steve Gerdes.

Jennifer, then 12, was struck by a car while delivering the paper near Cedar Bluffs on Feb. 21, 1991. She remains in a "persistent vegetative state," Gerdes said.

Joe Grant, an attorney for the Tribune, said the ruling has broad implications and could affect how the newspaper industry operates in the state.

Gerdes disagreed, saying "The court made it very clear that this is a very narrow ruling that is driven by the facts of this particular case."

Unlike laws in some other states, Nebraska law specifies neither that newspaper carriers are employees nor that they are independent contractors.

The Appeals Court said whether a carrier is an employee centers on how much control the newspaper has over those who deliver the paper.

A judge of the Workers' Compensation Court initially ruled that Jennifer was an employee of the newspaper, but a review panel reversed that order. Jennifer's parents took the case to the Appeals Court.

The Nebraska Press Association and the Nebraska Daily Press Association joined the Tribune in arguing that newspaper carriers are independent contractors and thus not covered under workers' compensation law.

The Fremont Tribune gave its carriers a handbook with direction on details to follow in delivering the newspapers, the Appeals Court said.

"These statements would support a finding that the Fremont Tribune kept control of all significant aspects of delivery," the court said.

Jennifer's father, David Larson, brought the case against Hometown Communications Inc., based in Alabama, which owns the Tribune.

Meanwhile, in Arkansas, a bill that would make newspaper carriers independent contractors and not newspaper employees won approval Jan. 25 from the state Senate. The current law says only carriers under 18 are exempt from the law. The bill backed by the state's newspapers would make all newspaper delivery and distribution workers exempt.

AP Reporter Top Vote-Getter for Standing Committee

WASHINGTON (AP) -- Reporters from The Associated Press, Reuters and USA Today won election to open seats on the Senate and House Standing Committee of Correspondents.

The panel of five journalists decides who may receive credentials to cover Congress for daily print media. It is the liaison with Congress to assure reporters access to Senate and House members and proceedings.

The committee also oversees journalists' working conditions in the Capitol and at national political conventions. About 2,100 reporters hold congressional credentials and were eligible to vote in the election.

Elected Jan. 26 were Alan Fram of the AP, William Welch of USA Today and Sue Kirchoff of Reuters. Fram, the leading vote-getter,

will chair the committee in 1996.

They join Mike Christensen of The Atlanta Journal-Constitution, who now chairs the committee, and Patrick Jasperse of The Milwaukee Journal. Christensen's and Jasperse's terms expire at the end of 1995.

The results were Fram, 456 votes; Welch, 377; Kirchhoff, 372.

Federal Judge Dismisses Grunseth Lawsuit Against Hotel

WASHINGTON (AP) -- A judge has thrown out the lawsuit Jon Grunseth filed against a Washington hotel after a news report about an extramarital liaison helped sink his 1990 campaign for Minnesota governor.

Grunseth claimed that someone at the J.W. Marriott Hotel had given a copy of his hotel bill to a reporter for the Star Tribune of Minneapolis.

The newspaper used the receipt to corroborate the claims of a woman who said she and Grunseth spent a night at the hotel in July 1989. Grunseth denied that liaison, although he admitted having had an affair with the woman.

U.S. District Judge Gladys Kessler said "there is not a shred of evidence" to support Grunseth's claim that the hotel gave the newspaper the receipt.

"Proving the existence of this fact is, as (Grunseth) has acknowledged, central to his claim," the judge wrote in a ruling issued Jan. 26.

Grunseth's attorney, Jerry Rice, said he expects to win the case on appeal.

"This was not at all unexpected. We are fairly confident we are going to reverse" the ruling, he said.

Grunseth was the Independent-Republican nominee for governor in 1990 when the Star Tribune ran stories about the affair and a pool party where he was accused of swimming nude with teen-age girls.

He dropped out of the race days before the election and was subsequently fired from his job as a vice president at Ecolab Inc., a St. Paul-based manufacturer of sanitation products.

Grunseth filed suit against the Marriott Corp., owners of the J.W. Marriott, after a 1992 magazine article about the governor's race said without attribution that a Star Tribune reporter "sweet talked" a Marriott employee into giving him the receipt.

Minnesota High Court Refuses to Hear Appeal in Campus Newspaper Case

ST. PAUL (AP) -- The Minnesota Supreme Court has refused to hear the appeal of a student reporter ordered to testify about an assault he witnessed at the University of Minnesota.

The state Court of Appeals had previously ruled that Jesse Rosen, a reporter for the campus newspaper, had no statutory or constitutional privilege to prevent him from testifying.

While covering a rally organized by the Progressive Students Organization to counter an expected neo-Nazi rally, Rosen saw a group of people approach Daniel Simmer and his fiancée. The group mistakenly believed Simmer was a neo-Nazi and a fight ensued, in which Simmer was injured.

In an interview with police, Rosen identified Kieran Knutson as the probable assailant. Knutson was charged with two counts of felony assault.

When Rosen was subpoenaed to testify at Knutson's trial, his paper, the Minnesota Daily, moved to quash the subpoena. A judge refused, concluding that Rosen waived any privilege he might have had by participating in the police interview.

The Court of Appeals rejected the newspaper's contention that Rosen had a privilege against testifying under the Minnesota Reporters Shield Law, which provides that the government may not compel any member of the media to disclose sources. The court said the law does not apply when no source is at risk and the reporter would testify about events he or she personally witnessed.

Minnesota Daily attorney Marshall Tanick said an appeal to the U.S. Supreme Court is being considered.

N.H. Supreme Court Reverses Reprimand of State Employee

CONCORD, N.H. (AP) -- The New Hampshire Supreme Court said a social worker who told a newspaper reporter New Hampshire had mishandled children in its care was protected by a state free-speech law.

The court unanimously reversed on Jan. 25 a reprimand against Jorel Booker, who was interviewed by a New Hampshire Seacoast Sunday reporter in 1991. The interview had been arranged by Booker's superiors at the Portsmouth office of the Division for Children and Youth Services. They, too, were interviewed.

Reporter Eric Waldman was writing about what it was like to work for a state agency that was being criticized following a study of eight children who had died or been injured after contact with the state.

Booker told Waldman that "there are kids in New Hampshire who are in far worse condition than they were before the state intervened in their lives. ... There are kids today who would be alive but for the inefficiency of" the agency.

Booker appealed his reprimand to the state Personnel Appeals Board, which upheld it. His union challenged the reprimand on grounds it violated the 1979 state law on the right of state workers to speak about their jobs and the state and federal constitutions.

The state maintained that Booker's assertion that some children would be alive but for state inefficiency was false and that he spoke not as an individual but as a professional representing the agency.

The court, however, said the state law gave Booker even greater protection than either constitution and Booker's remarks were opinion, not a professional assessment or statement of fact.

One of Booker's lawyers, Jon Meyer, said the decision is the first interpreting the law.

Police in Utah Apologize To Newspaper, TV Station, For Seizures

SALT LAKE CITY (AP) -- Police apologized to two news organizations for officers who ripped a page from a reporter's notebook and seized a cameraman's videotape.

The Salt Lake Tribune and KTVX-TV had indicated they would consider civil and criminal action over the incidents, which took place Jan. 25 in Ogden at the scene of a bomb squad's detonation of an explosive device addressed to President Clinton.

However, Tribune editor James E. Shelledy said the written apology -- signed by Ogden Police Chief Michael D. Empey and Lt. William M. Ladd -- along with return of the page, settled the matter. The page had been taken from reporter Tom Wharton after he was briefly handcuffed.

The letters apologized for "any embarrassment or discomfort" caused by the incidents and expressed hope for improved relations.

John Edwards, news director at KTVX, said he had received a similar written apology, also signed by Empey and Ladd. Police also returned a videotape seized from cameraman O.C. Budge.

Edwards said the station would accept the apology and was no longer considering legal action. However, he was not totally satisfied.

"I don't think anyone really apologized for violating the principle. They apologize for the act, but they don't understand the principle involved," he said.

The seizures occurred in Ogden, 35 miles north of Salt Lake City, where Tooele Army Depot's Explosives Ordnance Detachment was detonating several packages -- including an explosives-filled light bulb addressed to Clinton and a parcel containing a handgun destined for mass murderer Charles Manson.

Secret Service agents and police had arrested David Shane Shelby, a 29-year-old transient wanted on a federal warrant charging him with threatening Clinton and Vice President Al Gore, as he allegedly tried to mail the packages.

Police said EOD members asked them to seize Wharton's notebook and Budge's videotape because they feared they might contain classified information about their bomb disposal procedures.

The EOD, through Tooele Army Depot spokesman Dave Hunt, said it had nothing to do with seizing the tape, but the unit did confirm it asked for Wharton to be detained and his notebook taken.

Edwards said the station would eventually send someone around to the Ogden police station to pick up its videotape, but he wasn't in a hurry. Budge did not give authorities the tape they thought they were getting: He switched it with another at the last second.

Los Angeles Police Investigate Detective's Conduct in Spokane
SPOKANE, Wash. (AP) -- Los Angeles police have questioned a newspaper photographer and reporter involved in a scuffle with a homicide detective who is a key figure in the O.J. Simpson murder trial.

Bill Morlin, a reporter for The Spokesman-Review, said Jan. 30 two police sergeants separately interviewed him and photographer Dan McComb about the incident last week at Spokane International Airport.

McComb claimed that detective Mark Fuhrman hit him in the chest with a briefcase and knocked him down as McComb photographed him.

The sergeants from the department's internal affairs division asked for an audio tape of a 10-minute interview Morlin conducted with Fuhrman about the Simpson case and the detective's reasons for traveling to Spokane. Morlin said he would not hand it over unless subpoenaed.

Morlin said he and McComb provided the sergeants with the names and phone numbers of passers-by who witnessed the incident.

The Spokesman-Review also provided prints of each of the photo frames that McComb shot of Fuhrman, photo editor John Sale

said.

Los Angeles Police spokesman Lt. John Dunkin said Jan. 30 he didn't know where the review stood and whether the sergeants planned additional interviews.

Fuhrman found a bloody glove behind Simpson's mansion that matches one found near the slashed bodies of Nicole Brown Simpson and Ronald Goldman.

Simpson's lawyers contend that Fuhrman has a documented history of racism and may have planted the glove to frame their client in last June's slayings.

Fuhrman was on his way home from a house-hunting visit to Sandpoint, Idaho, Jan. 25 had just given an interview to Morlin when he got into a scuffle with McComb. Fuhrman said he plans to retire in Sandpoint.

Fuhrman hit McComb with a metal briefcase, pushed him down and shouted, "Get out of my face!" The Spokesman-Review reported.

Fuhrman's attorney, Robert Tourtelot, has acknowledged his client hit McComb with the briefcase but has blamed the incident on an "overzealous photographer."

The newspaper's managing editor, Chris Peck, sent a letter of complaint to L.A. police chief Willie Williams.

Peck said the news team that approached Fuhrman waited until after he and his wife had a private dinner in an airport cafe. The reporter and photographer identified themselves separately and acted professionally, Peck said.

Centralia Chronicle Lays Off 11 Employees

CENTRALIA, Wash. (AP) -- The Chronicle has laid off eight full-time and three part-time employees and offered early retirement to three others because of the shutdown of two major advertisers.

The layoffs represented about 10 percent of the work force and affected all departments of the 106-year-old newspaper.

The lost advertising revenue was the result of the closure of the Yard Birds Family Shopping Center and the Bag & Save grocery store.

Judge Awards Denver Post \$31,687 in Costs from Libel Suit

DENVER (AP) -- A judge has ruled that The Denver Post may collect \$31,687 in expenses incurred while defending against an unsuccessful libel lawsuit brought last fall by a Denver dry cleaner.

Judge John W. Coughlin, who announced the decision Jan. 25, had previously denied a new trial motion by the plaintiff, Smiley's Laundry and Dry Cleaners.

A jury in October exonerated the Post and business writer Chance Conner after a two-week trial. It found that a story published in June 1992 was substantially accurate in describing customer complaints against Smiley's.

The jury rejected Smiley's claim for \$1 million in damages.

Richard Podoll, attorney for Smiley's, said the plaintiff intends to appeal the jury verdict.

BROADCASTING:

FCC Decision Upheld to Allow Murdoch to Purchase New York

Post

WASHINGTON (AP) -- A 1993 action by federal regulators that allowed Fox Television's principal owner, Rupert Murdoch, to buy the New York Post was upheld by a U.S. Court of Appeals panel.

At the time that he bought the financially strapped Post, Murdoch owned WNYW-TV in New York. The Federal Communications Commission then issued a permanent waiver of rules that prohibited common ownership of a broadcast station and a daily newspaper in the same market.

"The FCC's detailed decision ... was not arbitrary and capricious or unsupported by the record," a three-judge panel ruled Jan. 27 in rejecting challenges brought by the Metropolitan Council of NAACP Branches and others.

"We conclude that none of their arguments is meritorious," the court said.

The 1993 waiver was the first time the FCC had relaxed its rules on cross ownership. The regulatory agency said it acted because hundreds of jobs were at stake.

More recently, Murdoch has been before the FCC in a dispute with NBC, which alleges that the stations that make up the foundation of Murdoch's Fox TV network violate foreign ownership restrictions.

That case figured in news reports shortly after last year's election when Murdoch met with then-incoming House Speaker Newt Gingrich. Democrats attacked Gingrich for that meeting because Murdoch also owns HarperCollins, the publisher who had agreed to pay Gingrich a \$4.5 million advance for two books.

Gingrich has announced since then he would forgo the advance and would be paid only royalties on sale of the books. He said he had no idea Murdoch owned HarperCollins.

When Murdoch acquired the New York TV station in 1986, he already owned the Post. He was given two years to divest his interest in the newspaper to satisfy the cross-ownership requirement. But one buyer went bankrupt, another bought it then had to back out and the newspaper went into bankruptcy.

Various officials, including then-Gov. Mario Cuomo, asked Murdoch to repurchase the paper. Murdoch agreed to assume management of the Post on the condition he would obtain the permanent FCC waiver.

His presentation to the government regulators was twofold: There was no other viable buyer willing to take on the large financial burden, and enforcing the longstanding cross-ownership rule would result not in diverse ownership but in elimination of a competitive voice, the Post's.

The purchase was authorized by the bankruptcy court on Sept. 15, 1993.

The NAACP group, headquartered in New York, and others claimed that Fox misrepresented some aspects of the bankruptcy situation and that the FCC, without good reason, denied a hearing about other potential purchasers.

The FCC determined that some statements by Fox were technically accurate but potentially misleading.

"The statements by Fox can be fairly characterized as bombast rather than outright falsehoods," the court panel said. "The FCC relied on other evidence in the record suggesting that Fox did not actually attempt to mislead the FCC on the relevant issues."

Judge: ABC Must Reveal Identity of 'Deep Cough' in Libel Suit
RICHMOND, Va. (AP) -- A judge has ordered ABC to reveal the identity of a confidential news source dubbed "Deep Cough" as part of a \$10 billion libel lawsuit filed by tobacco giant Philip Morris.

The source was featured in a "Day One" newsmagazine report last year that alleged Philip Morris Cos. and other tobacco companies spike cigarettes with extra nicotine to addict smokers.

Judge T.J. Markow also ruled on Jan. 26 that ABC must disclose the identity of sources from Philip Morris and the federal government. He gave ABC 10 days to comply.

ABC lawyer Thomas E. Spahn and Philip Morris attorney Lewis Booker declined to comment on the ruling.

"Deep Cough" appeared on camera only in silhouette, and her voice was disguised. ABC has identified her only as a former manager for R.J. Reynolds Tobacco Co., a Philip Morris competitor.

Philip Morris lawyers argued recently that learning the source's identity was crucial to proving malice and winning the lawsuit.

Markow said that because much of the story was based on the source's credibility, Philip Morris needs to know what she said, whether it was correct, and whether ABC knew if it was correct.

Markow also cleared the way for Philip Morris lawyers to subpoena credit card, telephone, airline and rental car records to try to learn the sources' identities. ABC had asked Markow to quash the subpoenas.

Markow emphasized that the type of "third-party discovery" sought by Philip Morris must be held to the same high standard that is applied in determining whether a reporter must reveal his source.

However, another judge on Jan. 27 granted ABC's request to stay the third-party discovery aspect of Markow's ruling until Jan. 31. The trial is scheduled for June 5.

Time Warner to Buy Cable TV Systems From Houston Industries

Eds: Kblcom is cq

NEW YORK (AP) -- Time Warner Inc. is buying Houston Industries Inc.'s cable interests for about \$2.2 billion, pushing its cable TV holdings closer in size to those of industry leader Tele-Communications Inc.

The deal announced Jan. 27, comprised of stock and assumed debt, advances Time Warner's efforts to assemble cable system groups large enough to justify the heavy investment in technology needed for new services like telephones.

Time Warner is betting that telephone service will become a big revenue generator for its cable systems.

Larger cable groups also let a cable operator stretch its marketing budget.

Other cable operators, including Tele-Communications of Englewood, Colo., are pursuing similar strategies.

On Jan. 26, TCI completed a \$1 billion-plus purchase of cable operator Tele-Cable Corp. after getting clearance from the Federal Trade Commission.

The commission required TCI to sell a cable system in Georgia where the companies had partly overlapping service. Industry executives were relieved the agency failed to raise broader objections to the deal because it was driven in part by the proximity of some of the Tele-Cable and TCI cable systems.

Time Warner is buying cable systems wholly owned by Houston Industries as well as 50 percent it didn't already own in other systems jointly owned by both companies. The systems have about 1.7 million subscribers.

Houston Industries, which owns and invests in power utilities, is getting a combination of common and preferred Time Warner stock worth about \$1 billion. Time Warner will also assume about \$1.2 billion in debt.

The deal is subject to franchise transfers and regulatory approval, but it's expected to be completed in the second half of the year.

Houston Industries' Kblcom division owns systems that serve about 690,000 subscribers in San Antonio and Laredo, Texas; the Minneapolis area; Portland, Ore., and Orange County, Calif.

In addition, Time Warner is getting Kblcom's 50 percent stake in Paragon Communications, a cable venture with 967,000 customers including systems in Tampa, Fla., and New York City.

Along with other announced transactions, the purchase would push the number of Time Warner cable subscribers to about 10 million. With the Tele-Cable purchase, TCI has about 11.5 million subscribers.

NY Times Co., Comcast Team to Create All-News Cable Channel in Florida

NEW YORK (AP) -- The Sarasota Herald-Tribune and the cable TV system operator Comcast Cable Communications have agreed to launch an all-news cable channel serving parts of southwestern Florida.

The channel, which will operate 24 hours a day in Sarasota and Charlotte counties, is expected to be launched by this summer.

The Herald-Tribune will produce programming and Comcast will distribute the channel through its Sarasota cable system and produce a daily local talk show.

Details of the agreement were not disclosed. The companies said Jan. 25 they hoped to sign a letter of intent soon.

The venture represents the deepest involvement yet by the New York Times Co., parent of the Sarasota newspaper, in the cable programming business.

The Times announced last fall that it intended to look for acquisition possibilities in electronic media, diversifying its current interests, which are mainly in newspapers and magazines.

The Times now produces a program for Channel 1, the all-news cable channel serving New York City.

Nearly 80 percent of the households in the two counties subscribe to Comcast's basic service. Comcast Cable is a division of Comcast Corp., a cable system operator based in Philadelphia.

Minnesota Court Revives Couple's Trespass Suit Against KSTP-TV

ST. PAUL (AP) -- A couple can sue a TV station for secretly videotaping inside their home, the Minnesota Court of Appeals ruled.

The trespassing claim was filed by a couple who let their veterinarian bring a student along on a home visit, not knowing the student also was a KSTP-TV employee who was videotaping the veterinarian's practice methods.

When the report was broadcast, it included two brief video

segments filmed inside Greg and Betty Copeland's house.

In a Jan. 24 ruling, the three-judge panel said the Copelands' permission for the student to accompany the veterinarian did not extend to secret videotaping.

"Newsgathering does not create a license to trespass or to intrude by electronic means into the precincts of another's home or office," the ruling said.

That reverses a ruling by a trial court, which threw the lawsuit out because the student did not "exceed the geographic boundaries of the Copelands' consent" and because the Copelands did not specifically limit their consent.

ABC News Receives Top duPont Award

NEW YORK (AP) -- ABC News, cited "for the depth and range of its news coverage," received the top prize of the 49th annual Alfred I. duPont-Columbia University Awards for broadcast journalism.

In awarding ABC a Gold Baton on Jan. 26, the jury praised coverage of Haiti by Linda Pattillo and a Peter Jennings report on "Washington's failure to respond to the disintegration of Bosnia." It also cited special reports on women's health issues on "World News Tonight," reports on the tobacco industry by John Martin and a special on the family of Amy Biehl, a Fulbright scholar slain in South Africa.

The jury awarded 10 Silver Batons for television news and two for radio. "Frontline" on PBS won two of the prizes.

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-- Charles Kuralt, recently retired CBS News roving correspondent, whose "work is extraordinary for its original approach to reporting, its broad range and consistent quality of writing and its uncommon sense of humanity."

-- CBS News, for a "60 Minutes" report on the catastrophic effects of decades of nuclear testing by the former Soviet Union on the people of Semipalatinsk.

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seven-hour series on the political and social changes wrought by the economic disaster.

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-- Michael Skoler and National Public Radio for first-hand coverage of civil war in Rwanda.

-- National Public Radio for "the breadth, quantity and quality of its reporting" on South Africa.

The awards were established by Jessie Ball duPont in memory of her husband and have been administered by Columbia University since 1968.

Former Employee Sues TV Station, Alleging Sex Discrimination
SPRINGFIELD, Mo. (AP) -- A former part-time production engineer at KOLR-TV has filed a sex discrimination lawsuit seeking \$1.1 million from the station.

Victor Paul Davis, 37, alleges that when he applied for a promotion to a full-time position at KOLR in 1993, his supervisor told him, "You have worked hard for the job and you have earned it, but you'd have to castrate yourself in order to get this job."

Davis, who worked at KOLR from 1990 to 1994, is now unemployed.

The lawsuit, which was filed recently, also includes a copy of an internal KOLR memo from 1993. Davis maintains that the memo shows KOLR managers gave the job to a woman because the station "maintained an illegal quota system."

KOLR has not yet entered a response to the suit. The station's labor attorney, Rick Temple, said that KOLR had no comment.

Davis says in the lawsuit that the woman "had no seniority and was less qualified" than he was.

He filed complaints with the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission and Missouri Human Rights Commission a few days after the woman was hired. The lawsuit says the station then cut his work hours and finally fired him last May.

PERSONNEL:

Covarrubias Named AP Correspondent in San Diego

SAN DIEGO (AP) -- Amanda Covarrubias, a reporter for The Associated Press in San Diego, has been named correspondent in charge of the bureau.

The appointment was announced Jan. 26 by Los Angeles chief of bureau Andy Lippman.

Covarrubias, 35, joined the AP in October 1993 after working for the Rocky Mountain News in Denver, The Oakland Tribune and The Desert Sun in Palm Springs.

She also worked as an associate producer for public television documentaries.

Covarrubias is a native of Santa Paula, Calif., and a graduate of San Diego State University.

She succeeds Sally Buzbee, who has transferred to the AP's Washington bureau.

Chicago Tribune Names First Woman as Managing Editor for News

CHICAGO (AP) -- The Chicago Tribune has named a woman as its managing editor for news for the first time in its 148-year history.

Ann Marie Lipinski, a 1988 Pulitzer Prize winner, succeeds F. Richard Ciccone, who was appointed associate editor.

Lipinski, 39, directed the Tribune's 1993 "Killing Our Children" yearlong series that detailed the homicides of every child under age 15 in the six-county area. The series won many awards, including the Robert F. Kennedy Journalism Awards' grand prize.

Lipinski was one of three reporters who won the Pulitzer in 1988 for a series titled "City Council: The Spoils of Power."

Since she joined the paper in 1978, she has served as a reporter on the features and metropolitan staffs and as leader of the newspaper's investigative team. She was associate managing editor for metropolitan news before becoming deputy managing editor.

Lipinski, a native of Trenton, Mich., and a graduate of the University of Michigan, said she is "humbled and excited at the same time."

Tribune editor Howard Tyner said Lipinski "has performed with nothing less than highest distinction on every task asked of her in nearly 17 years at the Tribune. Most of all, she has shown a fierce passion for excellence, a trait that will continue to leave a lasting imprint on our newsroom."

Dow Jones Promotes Three Senior Executives

NEW YORK (AP) -- Dow Jones & Co. has promoted three senior executives:

--Danforth W. Austin, vice president for circulation of The Wall Street Journal, was appointed general manager of the Journal with responsibility for circulation, advertising and production.

--Karen Elliott House, Dow Jones vice president, international, was named president of the international group. She succeeds James H. Ottaway Jr., who continues as chairman of the Ottaway group of community newspapers and president of the magazine group.

--Dorothea Coccoli Palsho, vice president, information services, was named president of Dow Jones Business Information Services group, a new position.

In other changes in the news industry:

--David Churchill, former managing editor of the Daily Journal in Fergus Falls, Minn., was named president of Austin Newspapers Inc. and publisher of the Austin (Minn.) Daily Herald. He succeeds Jim Negen, who resigned.

--Robert Gabordi, editor of The Marietta (Ohio) Times since July 1992, was named executive editor of The Herald-Dispatch in Huntington, W. Va. Both newspapers are owned by the Gannett Co. Gabordi, 38, replaced Randy Hammer, who recently was named executive editor of the Springfield (Mo.) News-Leader.

--Louis P. Harvath III, president and publisher of the Williamson (W.Va.) Daily News since 1977, will succeed Glen O. Long, who is

retiring, as publisher of the LaGrange (Ga.) Daily News. Donald R. Wilder Jr., publisher of the Union (S.C.) Daily Times, will replace Harvath. All three newspapers are owned by Mid-South Management Co. Inc.

--David Petty, editor of The News-Star in Monroe, La., since November 1992, was named publisher of the Hattiesburg (Miss.) American. He succeeds William Hunsberger, who went to Cincinnati as vice president of circulation for The Cincinnati Enquirer and The Cincinnati Post.

--Sanders Hook, publisher of the La Crosse (Wis.) Tribune for more than seven years, said he will retire June 1. Hook, 55, has worked for the newspaper's owner, Lee Enterprises, for 30 years. A successor likely will be named by April.

DEATHS:

Lillard McEwan Ailor

RICHMOND, Va. (AP) -- Lillard McEwan "Max" Ailor, longtime outdoors writer for the Richmond Times-Dispatch, died Jan. 23. He was 74.

Ailor came to the Times-Dispatch in 1946 after serving during World War II in the Marine Corps, where he reached the rank of captain. After 10 years of reporting on all sports, he became a specialist in writing about hunting, fishing and the outdoors.

Survivors include his wife and two sons.

John Clift

DENISON, Texas (AP) -- John Clift, a reporter for The Denison Herald for nearly 50 years, died Jan. 22. He was 79.

Clift joined The Daily Oklahoman shortly after college, then worked for the Army newspaper Stars and Stripes during World War II. He also worked for newspapers in New York and St. Louis before coming to the Herald, where he worked until a week before his death.

Charles K. Devall

KILGORE, Texas (AP) -- Charles K. Devall, publisher of the Kilgore News Herald from 1935 to 1979, died Jan. 28. He was 86.

Survivors include a sister.

Gorden A. Lawhead

MEMPHIS, Tenn. (AP) -- Gorden A. Lawhead, a Memphis broadcaster for almost 40 years, died Jan. 23. He was 78.

Lawhead joined WHBQ radio in 1945 and moved to the station's television side in 1953. From the late 1960s to the late 1970s, Lawhead delivered editorial opinions for WHBQ-TV. He retired as the station's director of public affairs in 1981.

Frank L. Martin Jr.

WEST PLAINS, Mo. (AP) -- Frank L. Martin Jr., a former war correspondent for The Associated Press and former editor and publisher of the West Plains Daily Quill, died Jan. 24. He was 82.

Martin was hired by the AP in the mid-1930s to report on the Japanese occupation of Shanghai. He went on to cover China, Burma and India during World War II.

He transferred to the AP's San Francisco bureau in 1946, but

resigned that same year and bought the West Plains Daily Quill. In the 1960s and 1970s, Martin also published weekly newspapers in Salem and Mammoth Spring, Ark.

He relinquished control of the newspaper to his son, Frank L. Martin III, in 1985 and retired as chairman of the board of the Quill Press Co. in 1992.

Besides his son, survivors include his wife and a sister.

Richard A. Moore

WASHINGTON (AP) -- Richard A. Moore, president and chief executive officer of Times Mirror Broadcasting Co. from 1951 to 1962, died Jan. 27. He was 81.

Moore, who was special counsel to President Nixon during the Watergate era and later U.S. ambassador to Ireland, also was founder and associate producer of the McLaughlin Group, the public affairs television program for which he won an Emmy in 1984.

Survivors include his wife, four sons and a daughter.

NOTES FROM EVERYWHERE: The Arkansas Department of Correction is asking lawmakers to repeal an unenforced 1913 law that prohibits newspaper reporters from publishing details about the executions of state prisoners. The law, written before the dawn of broadcast journalism, says newspapers can report only that a person was executed. ... The papers of the late Harrison E. Salisbury, the Pulitzer Prize-winning New York Times reporter who also wrote 29 books, have been donated to Columbia University. The materials date from 1930 when Salisbury, then 22, began working for United Press in St. Paul, Minn. Salisbury, who died in 1993 at age 84, won the 1955 Pulitzer Prize for international reporting for a series based on his five years in Moscow.

End Industry News Advisory

DuPont Awards

APn 1/26/95 11:02 PM

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Kazakh leader sees move to ``Euro-Asian Union''

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(Writes through with Nazarbayev news conference details and interp, changes dateline from Alma-Ata)

By Brian Killen

MOSCOW, Jan 23 (Reuter) - Kazakh President Nursultan Nazarbayev, trying to build a "Euro-Asian Union" on the basis of the old Soviet Union, said on Monday the two biggest pieces of the jigsaw had moved closer.

Russia and Kazakhstan, which together account for almost 90 percent of former Soviet territory, signed 17 agreements last week covering key areas such as military cooperation, citizenship, currency convertibility and a customs union.

"All of these are based on my idea for a Euro-Asian Union," Nazarbayev told a news conference.

In Alma-Ata, Prime Minister Akezhan Kazhegeldin said the agreements proposed setting up joint military structures, as well as putting four military testing sites under Russian control. "Our societies need integration," he said.

The agreements confirmed the two-speed approach to integration among members of the Commonwealth of Independent States, with an inner core of Slav states developing closer economic ties.

Russia, Kazakhstan and Belarus all signed a customs union treaty, which should reduce trade barriers and help restore economic links that collapsed when the 15 former Soviet republics went their separate ways in 1991.

Ukraine, the other big Slav state, is still suspicious of Russia and any accords that might dilute its independence. But President Leonid Kuchma has shown more willingness than his predecessor Leonid Kravchuk to restore economic ties.

Kiev signed a customs union with Belarus on January 6.

Nazarbayev said Russia and Kazakhstan, both significant oil producers, would not compete with each other in export trade.

He said he and Russian President Boris Yeltsin had discussed a project to build a new oil export pipeline from western Kazakhstan to the Black Sea.

Russia, Kazakhstan and Oman are equal partners in the Caspian Pipeline Consortium, which announced last week that construction of the first section would begin this year.

Russia's Gazprom is also involved in developing the big Karachaganak gas field in northwest Kazakhstan with British Gas and Italy's Agip. "An agreement will be signed this month," Nazarbayev said.

He said another agreement allowed for Russian and Kazakh citizens to serve in either country's armed forces. Russian military facilities in Kazakhstan would also be preserved and leasing agreements were reached for military test ranges.

But Kazhegeldin said nuclear tests at the Semipalatinsk range in northeast Kazakhstan would not be resumed.

Another accord called for measures to ensure the mutual convertibility of the Russian rouble and the Kazakh tenge currencies, with central banks coordinating monetary policy.

Nazarbayev and Yeltsin also signed documents guaranteeing the rights of Russian citizens living in Kazakhstan and Kazakh passport holders in Russia, as well as easing citizenship application procedures.

Diplomats in Alma-Ata welcomed the move, which should mean that a March 1 deadline for people living there to decide whether to opt for Kazakh or Russian citizenship will not cause a mass exodus of ethnic Russians.

European Slavs make up around two-fifths of the population of Kazakhstan -- roughly equalling ethnic Kazakhs in number. But they are in the majority in the north, and many want their territory to join neighbouring Russia.

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