

by Swiss authorities for allegedly running up large credit card bills at the expense of a Swiss company that was awarded lucrative Kremlin building contracts.

In Moscow yesterday, 17 prominent businessmen, including Mr. Berezovsky, wrote an open letter to the prosecutor general, saying Mr. Gusinsky's arrest threatens to destroy confidence in Russian as a place to do business. "Until yesterday we believed we live in a democratic country," they wrote. "Today we have serious doubts about that."

If Mr. Putin really want to tackle corruption, he may have to put the worst offenders in jail. But more important, he will have to overhaul the Russian legal system and its enforcement mechanisms and reduce the bureaucracy and regulation that give rise to so much graft and make government more transparent. Since most successful or powerful people in Russia have something to hide. It is not hard for the Kremlin to wield the "law" as a political weapon to badger its enemies. But that's not cracking down on corruption; that's just cracking down.

[From the Financial Times, June 15, 2000]

PUTIN'S PRESSURE

A move by Vladimir Putin, Russia's new president, to clip the wings of his country's formidable business barons was widely anticipated. If he is going to reassert the power of the state over the financial oligarchs who usurped much of its authority during the Kremlin rule of Boris Yeltsin, that is necessary. But the decision to arrest Vladimir Gusinsky, the media tycoon, raises a number of questions.

He is neither one of the most powerful nor one of the most notorious of that group. His real claim to fame is that his Media-Most group owns the television station NTV and Sevodnya newspaper among others—outspoken critics of Mr. Putin's government. In particular, they have questioned the conduct of the war in Chechnya. They have undoubtedly reflected the inclinations of their owner but they have also been healthily outspoken. In so doing, they have been helping ensure that the press acts as a critic of government—an essential element in Russia's slow progress towards democracy.

Mr. Gusinsky now appears to be paying the price. Although his arrest is ostensibly on suspicion of fraud and the illegal acquisition of state property worth \$10m, the action follows a particularly heavy-handed raid by security police, armed to the teeth and wearing balaclava helmets, on his headquarters—all suggesting a deliberate campaign of intimidation. Other actions by Mr. Putin's administration indicate a similarly harsh attitude to any sign of media opposition. The TV station controlled by Yuri Luzhkov, Moscow's mayor, is having to fight in the courts to renew its license. The registration system for new publications has been greatly tightened.

The president does not appear to be a believer in glasnost, the openness introduced by Mikhail Gorbachev into the Russian media. More than any other reform, that probably guaranteed the end of Communist rule and the Soviet Union. By allowing exposure of the iniquities, incompetence and corruption of the previous regime, glasnost ensured there was no going back. By definition, however, glasnost was inimical to the old KGB security service—Mr. Putin's secretive former employer.

President Bill Clinton has already expressed his concern about signs of restrictions on press freedom in Russia. When Gerhard Schroeder, the German chancellor, meets Mr. Putin today, he should do the same, in strong terms. The Russian president has said he knew nothing of Mr. Gusinsky's

arrest. He should have done, particularly in view of the widespread protests that followed. An unfettered press is an essential part of a market economy. He has a lot to learn.

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

WEST VIRGINIA DAY

• Mr. ROCKEFELLER. Mr. President, today we celebrate West Virginia's 137th year as a state. West Virginia joined the Union in the midst of the Civil War when President Lincoln admitted it to the Union as the 35th state on June 20, 1863.

The spirit of pride and determination that gave the first West Virginians the courage to start anew can still be seen in the ever-innovative and evolving ways that West Virginians have adapted to changing economics and culture. This is apparent in the transitions of the coal and steel industries as well as in the increasing cultivation of the tourism industry. However, through the continual change, West Virginians have held a heritage that remains rich in song, craft, and tradition. It is as visible at the State Fair of West Virginia in Lewisburg, the Appalachian Heritage Festival in Shepherdstown, and the Tamarack Arts Center in Beckley as it is at Bob's Grocery in Lindside. The state has an abundance of coal, steel, forests, rivers, and mountains, but her greatest resource has always been her people.

This natural charm of West Virginians is reflected in the scenic treasures that crown the state. Though born during a time of turmoil, present-day West Virginia is an emblem of peace and tranquility. Ernest W. James captured it perfectly:

There autumn hillsides are bright with scarlet trees;

And in the spring, the robins sing,
While apple blossoms whisper in the breeze
And where the sun draws rainbows in the mist
of waterfalls and mountain rills,
My heart will be always in the West Virginia hills.

So on this, West Virginia's 137th birthday, I am enormously proud to invite my colleagues to join me in recognizing and celebrating this West Virginia Day.●

ALASKA RECIPIENTS OF PRESIDENTIAL AWARDS FOR EXCELLENCE IN MATHEMATICS AND SCIENCE TEACHING

• Mr. MURKOWSKI. Mr. President, I have come to the Senate floor today to congratulate three exceptional teachers in Alaska—Douglas Heetderks of Anchorage, Lura Hegg of Palmer, and Gretchen Murphy of Fairbanks. President Clinton named these Alaskans as recipients of the 1999 Presidential Awards for Excellence in Mathematics and Science Teaching. This is our Nation's highest honor for mathematics and science teachers in grades K through 12.

Each year, a national panel of distinguished scientists, mathematicians and educators recommends one elementary and one secondary math teacher and one elementary and one secondary science teacher from each state or territory to receive a presidential award. The 1999 recipients were selected from among 650 finalists.

The Presidential Awards for Excellence in Mathematics and Science Teaching Program is administered by the National Science Foundation (NSF) on behalf of the White House. The program was established in 1983 and is designed to recognize and reward outstanding teachers. In addition to a presidential citation and a trip to Washington, DC, each recipient's school receives a NSF grant of \$7,500 to be used under the direction of the teacher, to supplement other resources for improving science or mathematics programs in their school system.

Douglas Heetderks, Lura Hegg and Gretchen Murphy are exceptional and highly dedicated teachers. Douglas Heetderks teaches Elementary Science at Susitna Elementary in Anchorage; Lura Hegg teaches Secondary Science at Colony Middle School in Palmer; and Gretchen Murphy teaches Elementary Math at University Park Elementary School in Fairbanks. In addition to having extensive knowledge of math and science, they have demonstrated an understanding of how students learn and have the ability to engage students, foster curiosity and generate excitement. Mr. Heetderks, Ms. Hegg, and Ms. Murphy have displayed an experimental and innovative attitude in their approach to teaching and are highly respected for their leadership.

Mr. President, our nation's future depends on today's teachers. Currently, 40 percent of America's 4th graders read below the basic level on national reading tests. On international tests, the nation's 12th graders rank last in Advanced Physics compared with students in 18 other countries. And one-third of all incoming college freshmen must enroll in a remedial reading, writing, or mathematics class before taking regular courses.

If we are to turn these dismal statistics around we are going to need more and talented teachers like Mr. Heetderks, Ms. Hegg and Ms. Murphy. I applaud them for their hard work and dedication to our children. They are educating those who will lead this country in creating, developing, and putting to work new ideas and technology.●

LIEUTENANT GENERAL RONALD B. BLANCK

• Mr. INOUE. Mr. President, I would like to take a moment to honor Lieutenant General Ronald B. Blanck as he retires from the United States Army after more than thirty-two years of active duty service. For the last four years, General Blanck has served as