

nances and productive forces, and economic and political will. We shall fight for our people, having gathered the resources of our state into one, spiritually mobilized and united, to win the battle for a Russian 21st Century.

We are convinced that there will be a response to this mobilizing impulse—from the heroic Navy of Russia, which will not quit the expanses of the World Ocean. From the brave Russian Army, finishing off the terrorists in Chechnya. From science, which preserves the greatest discoveries of our time in its laboratories with the power cut off. From patriotic culture, never tired of preaching the Good, Love, and Mercy. From the Church, lighting holy lamps over the graves of our heroes, and praying for all who care for the salvation of Russia.

We know that the tragedy of the *Kursk*, the tears of the living and the holy martyrdom of those who died, will unite us into an invincible people. And that a new nuclear-powered *Kursk*, its construction funded by the people's savings as was done in the times of great troubles, will put out to sea. Into the great ocean of the history of our Fatherland.

Zyuganov's 'National Salvation Program'

Sent to President Putin on Aug. 25, the main points of Communist Party leader Gennadi Zyuganov's platform were summarized by Interfax.

1. To qualitatively change budget-making procedures. To use every possibility to radically increase the budget, primarily through the restoration of government control over leading companies taken away through unlawful privatization. To nationalize the country's natural resources and make them public property.

2. To significantly raise funding levels for science, education, and health protection. To earmark the necessary means for the armed forces and all institutions responsible for the security of both the nation and its people.

3. To tighten executive discipline. To create a full-fledged system of public and government control. To give the Federal Assembly powers to control the enforcement of the law and to conduct parliamentary investigations. To create conditions for the effective efforts of the judicial system, prosecutor's offices, and law-enforcement agencies to protect the rights and liberties of the individual.

4. To strengthen the economic and intellectual foundations of the state. To guarantee true freedom of speech. To stop the anti-state propaganda dominating national TV and radio. To guarantee free comparison of all points of view and unbiased coverage of news and events. To set up supervisory councils in the government-owned media outlets for this purpose.

5. To mercilessly suppress separatist and terrorist forces. To resolutely stop the implementation of a strategy of tension aimed at creating an atmosphere of lawlessness, fear, and apathy and the destruction of the foundations of the state system and morals.

End 'Beggarly Conditions' for the Armed Forces

The respected Russian economist Stanislav Menshikov published the article "Playing with Defense Money Led to Kursk Disaster," in the Moscow Tribune of Aug. 25.

While the immediate causes of the Kursk submarine disaster are probably technical, or results of human error or sabotage of some sort, the larger and more important lesson is that Russia has not been spending enough money and resources on maintaining its defense capacity in an adequate condition. The Northern Fleet . . . reports that so far it has been receiving less than 10% of its funding requirements. . . . Under such conditions tragic incidents such as the one that happened are bound to happen and it is sheer luck that they have not occurred more often.

Beggarly conditions are not peculiar to the Northern Fleet, but are shared by the armed forces in general. . . . Another result is the current pressure to scrap most of the nation's nuclear arsenal, eliminate ground anti-aircraft defenses, and

France's Védrine: Putin Passed a Difficult Test

French Foreign Minister Hubert Védrine presented his insights into President Vladimir Putin's handling of the *Kursk* crisis, during an interview on Aug. 29 with Europe 1 radio. He rejected the idea that Putin had waited a too long before requesting Western help because of his "mistrust" of the West. Given the limited information Putin had at that point, Védrine could only suggest that the Russian Navy did not communicate adequate information on the catastrophe to Putin with sufficient haste.

Europe 1 asked whether Putin was facing up to his first crisis as a leader, to which Védrine replied that Putin had done so. Again stating that his knowledge was limited, Védrine said, however, that his "intuition" was that Putin reacted "well and quickly" once he had all information in hand. Védrine continued, Putin spoke to the Russians, as no other leader had spoken to them before, acknowledging his portion of responsibility in the mishandling of the catastrophe, but, at the same time, counterattacking against the Russian oligarchs.

This entire affair, he said, is taking place in the midst of a struggle for power in Moscow: Putin has not yet asserted his power over the politicians, the military, the oligarchs, and the mafia, offering his evaluation that "this drama will be an episode in the establishment of real power for Putin." —*Christine Bierre*