

# 'Awkward' talks failed to avert battle

Russian church official says publicity hobbled efforts at negotiation

By Agostino Bono  
Catholic News Service

ROME — A Russian Catholic official lamented Oct. 4 the failure of Russian Orthodox mediation to prevent the bloody Moscow battles between followers of President Boris Yeltsin and supporters of dissident legislators barricaded in the Russian parliament building.

Mediation efforts might have been more successful if they had been conducted quietly rather than with so much publicity, said Dominican Father Alexander Khmelnsky, director of the information center of the apostolic administration for European Russia.

The priest was interviewed by telephone at his Moscow office Oct. 4 as troops loyal to Yeltsin gained the upper hand over the barricaded legislators and their supporters.

Father Khmelnsky said the Orthodox mediation was supported by Archbishop Tadeusz Kondrusiewicz, Catholic apostolic administrator for European Russia. The priest released the text of a telegram sent to Orthodox Patriarch Alexei II of Moscow.

The telegram supported "your so-necessary initiative for a peaceful solution" and said the archbishop joined the patriarch in praying "that the bloodshed end as soon as possible."

Meanwhile, the Russian news agency Tass reported that the patriarch suffered chest pains Oct. 3 and was ordered to remain in bed by his doctors.

According to late reports from Moscow Oct. 4, lines of unarmed men started leaving the Russian parliament building, some of them with hands behind their heads in apparent surrender.



Two riot police officers arrest a hard-line demonstrator Sept. 28 as several hundred protesters tried to join fellow hard-liners inside the Parliament.

A Yeltsin aide said reports of 500 killed in the battle for the Russian White House, the popular name for the Russian legislative building, were "clearly exaggerated."

Father Khmelnsky said there was "a certain logic" in Yeltsin's position on holding parliamentary elections six months before presidential elections, a key issue in the political stand-off leading to the battles.

Parliamentary dissidents wanted simultaneous elections.

"Yeltsin wanted to maintain some continuity and not create a political vacuum," he said.

Mediation was done "with a thud," Father Khmelnsky said.

"There was a prayer service and a lot of publicity. It was awkward when

you look back at it," he said.

Father Khmelnsky expressed fear that Yeltsin's opponents may not have been serious in wanting to negotiate, preferring to use it as a delaying tactic to organize supporters.

The dissident lawmakers are a widely diverse group of fascists, nationalists, communists, career-seekers and military men, he said.

Russian Orthodox Patriarch Alexei II of Moscow interrupted a visit to the United States to return home and supervise the mediation efforts.

Talks began Sept. 30, but ended inconclusively a day later when legislators rejected a proposal to surrender their arms in exchange for lifting the police blockade of the parliament building.

The crisis began Sept. 21 when Yeltsin dissolved the Soviet-era parliament, which was blocking his economic and political reform programs, and called for parliamentary elections in December.

Hard-line lawmakers reacted by impeaching Yeltsin, and their supporters built barricades around the parliament building. Yeltsin then announced presidential elections for June, but the lawmakers preferred simultaneous elections.

Street fighting between Yeltsin followers and parliamentary supporters began Oct. 2.

## Archdiocese again faces fiscal crisis

CHICAGO (CNS) — The Archdiocese of Chicago is facing serious financial problems that must be addressed



immediately, or "we will be broke in four years," Cardinal Joseph L. Bernardin announced during a regional meeting for parish leaders.

"We can't wait until the strategic planning process is over," Cardinal Bernardin said at the Sept. 20 meeting. "We will be broke in four years unless we take serious steps."

The archdiocese wants to avoid a financial crisis similar to the one that occurred in 1989. That crisis forced the closing of 52 parishes and schools in 1990.

Among steps the cardinal said he plans to approve is requiring a balanced budget for all activities funded by the archdiocesan pastoral center.

He is also considering the appointment of someone to work full time on the budget crisis and on providing financial advice for 25 to 40 struggling parishes.

And he wants to stop lending money to struggling parishes for capital expenditures except in cases in which the expenditures are needed to keep buildings safe for use.

The main problem, he said, is at parishes where expenses are outpacing income. Parishes are expected to run a \$12 million to \$15 million deficit this year.

Last year, parishes and schools posted a \$12.8 million deficit, and the archdiocesan deficit was \$6.4 million.

The archdiocese's \$28.9 million deficit in 1989 led to massive parish closings the next year. Since the 1990 closings, the archdiocese has controlled expenses at the pastoral center, Cardinal Bernardin said.

But the archdiocese has been hurt by a shortfall in parish collections, low response to the Cardinal's Appeal and expenses related to sexual misconduct.



John M. Hedges - Alan E. Giltner

### John M. Hedges Funeral Home

Serving The Rochester Community Since 1912

288-4664  
6 Empire Blvd.

(corner of Culver Rd. & Empire Blvd.)

Douglas C. Meeson

"Our Family Serving Your Family For Over 65 Years"

Robert E. Vay

### Vay-Schleich & Meeson Funeral Home, Inc.

2692 Dewey Avenue

663-2100

1075 Long Pond Road

### FUNERAL DIRECTORS OF THE ROCHESTER DIOCESE

The funeral Directors listed herein offer pre-need and at-need services and counseling in accordance with the Catholic faith.

#### IRONDEQUOIT

Schauman-Sulewski Funeral Home Inc.  
Edwin Sulewski  
2100 St. Paul Street  
Rochester, NY 14621  
(716) 342-3400

Michael R. Yackiw Funeral Home  
1270 Norton Street  
Rochester, NY 14621  
(716) 544-5000

#### ROCHESTER

Crawford Funeral Home, Inc.  
"Our Family Serving Your Family"  
Located at 495 N. Winton Rd.  
(Between Atlantic & Humboldt)  
(716) 482-0400

#### GATES

DiPonzio Funeral Home, Inc.  
(Across from St. Theodore's Church)  
219 Spencerport Road  
Rochester, NY 14606  
429-6700

#### MONUMENTS

### HART MONUMENT CO.

2301 Dewey Avenue  
Opposite Holy Sepulchre Cemetery

Since 1856

865-6746

### ARNDT FUNERAL HOME

Family Owned & Operated



RONALD JOHN ARNDT  
ROBERT J. ARNDT  
Funeral Directors

225-6350

1118 Long Pond Road  
(South of Maiden Lane)