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The Institute Of Current World Affairs

OF PURGAS, ELECTIONS, SALMON HATCHERIES, AND PEANUT HOLES

December 26, 1993

Petropavlovsk-Kamchatsky
Russia

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Dear Peter,

Few storms can match the force of a Kamchatkan *purga*. A *purga* usually begins in the Sea of Japan as a low-pressure weather system around which gather a host of winds. It comes north across Sakhalin Island or the Kuriles, dumping loads of snow, before angling west into the Sea of Okhotsk. There it picks up more energy and moisture from the dark winter waters. The storm lingers a few hours or even days before slamming into the southern Kamchatka peninsula along a path that carries it across the North Pacific to the Aleutian Islands, and the Bering Sea beyond.

When the storm hits Petropavlovsk-Kamchatsky, which lies directly in the winter storm path, the *purga* has been whipped into a blinding snowstorm by hurricane force winds. During a *purga*, even a trip to the bread store turns into an epic of Arctic survival. The howling gale piles up snow into vast drifts; the wind pummels everything into submission. When I ventured out during our latest *purga*, just before Christmas, I had the distinct sensation that I was dumbly staring into at a television screen during non-broadcast hours. Everything was turned off except the horizontally blowing snow. A *purga* would qualify as a natural disaster in America, but in Petropavlovsk-Kamchatsky it was business as usual...the city broadcasted avalanche warnings (and in fact, three children died under 50 tons of snow when a slope above their play area released), the military donated mighty trucks to deliver bread and clear snow, and the kiosks, admirable bastions of free enterprise, stayed open to sell liquors and Snickers bars. Stoic, unstoppable *babushki*, bundled in a dark overcoat and lugging bulging tote-bags, waddled against the wind.

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Since 1925 the Institute of Current World Affairs (the Crane-Rogers Foundation) has provided long-term fellowships to enable outstanding young adults to live outside the United States and write about international areas and issues. Endowed by the late Charles R. Crane, the Institute is supported by contributions from like-minded individuals and foundations.

Anybody with a lick of sense, of course, stays home during a *purga* to drink tea and catch up on their reading, but Petropavlovsk-Kamchatsky's drivers are a breed apart. This time, fleets of cheap used Mazdas and Hondas skidded and slid their way onto the roads to bang into each other in a wild bumper-car game that left over scores of fender-benders in its wake, and countless abandoned vehicles blocking traffic and hindering efforts to plow the streets. Many hapless Hondas have been entombed under pyramids of snow and remain there, frozen like TV dinners, until the city's snow removal teams can dig them out. Where were they all going? What errand could have lured them outside to drive in weather you can barely walk in? The *purga* is another mystery of Russia--wind-whipped and furious, awesome and lovely in its destructive force, spinning people around, making them run for cover, slapping and slamming them from all sides, coming from nowhere and everywhere at once. You bend to its elemental blast or it burys you.

The New Political Year Begins Amid Desperate Times For Kamchatka's Fishing Industry

Like a *purga*, the turmoil boiling across Russia has engulfed the Kamchatka Region. Every conversation leads to discussions of politics and economics, to the confusion swirling in people's lives. The December 12 election results hit like an unexpected act of nature, caused by forces beyond their control rather than Russia's body politic. Yet the backlash against Russian Federation President Boris Yeltsin and his 'reforms' was long brewing.

Anybody surprised with the strong showing of Liberal-Democratic Party candidate V. V. Zhirinovskiy in Russia's elections should contemplate the recent case of the factory ship *Komsomolsk-na-Amure* (Komosomolsk-on-the-Amur, named for an industrial city at the mouth of the Amur River). *Komosomolsk-na-Amure*, a *plavbaza*--literally a 'floating base', a huge floating factory ship with a crew of approximately 300 persons--spent November and December working in the Sea of Okhotsk as a processor and cannery on an expedition for Kamchatka crab. The *plavbaza* is owned by Petropavlovsk-Kamchatsky's *UTRF*, Kamchatka's largest fishing enterprise.¹

Winter conditions on the Sea of Okhotsk are extremely difficult. Bad weather frequently halts fishing entirely. Crews can sit idle for days. When there is work, it is usually done in exhausting 8-hour shifts on filthy, noisy processing lines. Food on Russian factory vessels is notoriously bad and quarters--four mates to a room--are claustrophobic. Usually the only thing that makes a trip like this worthwhile is the hefty lump sum of pay crewmembers receive at the end of the voyage. The *Komsomolsk-na-Amure*'s crew got lucky on this trip, though. They were scheduled to call on the port of Pusan, South Korea, following the crab expedition. A port call in a foreign country is always enjoyable for crew of any vessel, but is a special treat for Russian crews, who prize the opportunity to buy hard-to-get consumer goods, cheap used cars, and see life in a 'civilized country'.

However, soon after the *Komsomolsk-na-Amure* quit fishing and offloaded its holds, the mates received an unexpected telegram. *UTRF*'s General Director Alexandr Yakovlevich Abramov cancelled the *plavbaza*'s port call and ordered it to go north towards Magadan and continue working until further notice on another expedition.

The crew's indignation can well be imagined. They took only minutes to react. According to sources in *UTRF*, somebody with a Caucasian accent called the bridge and said, "*Bydem gorit*"--We're going to burn. The voice demanded that the captain contact Abramov and have him change the orders. The captain, sensing mutiny, frantically telegraphed Abramov, but the General Director held firm to his orders, ordering the captain to do as he was told and exercise his authority to command the vessel. Shortly thereafter, a fire broke out in the *Komsomolsk-na-Amure*'s fuel holds. The fire crippled the *plavbaza*'s steering mechanism and forced the crew of 124 to evacuate to other vessels that had come to assist extinguish the fire. Fortunately, there were no fatalities. The *Komsomolsk-na-Amure* eventually limped back to Petropavlovsk-Kamchatsky, going neither to Magadan nor Pusan, South Korea.

In early December, the vessel's workers and other workers from *UTRF* banded together and talked to the press. Their grievances against General Director Abramov and *UTRF*'s management, poured out in a bitter torrent. We haven't gotten paid in months, they complained, and nobody seems to be able to explain why *UTRF* has no money. The General Director refuses to meet with workers.

Workers at the press conference told the tale of another *plavbaza*, the *Rybak Kamchatki* (Kamchatka Fisherman). According to them, the *plavbaza* recently delivered 60 tons of crab to Pusan. The crab appeared on none of the ship's documents. Three mysterious containers were loaded aboard the vessel for the return trip to Russia. Once at sea, the vessel met another ship--of undetermined nationality--in the open ocean, and transferred the containers to it. The containers also did not appear on any documentation and crew were instructed not to ask any questions. It seemed obvious to the workers that something suspicious--and highly lucrative--linked the crab and the containers, but their efforts to find out anything specific met with silence. "We didn't declare the crab to Russian customs officers before we left, and in Pusan it was also delivered without declaration. We have no idea who the crab was for," said one worker.

The workers' confusion and anguish was obvious during the press conference--what were their bosses up to? How come they have to wait months for their meager wages in rubles--rubles!--when Abramov and his cronies regularly travel to South Korea, Japan, Singapore, Europe and North America? Abramov's 'legendary travels to California' particularly grated...how come he gets to go bask in the sunshine when we can't even buy vegetables at home? One woman pleaded with Abramov, "You are the General Director of our joint-stock company, you know what is going on, and we all

depend on you. Please help us. We have children and old people to take care of...something must be done." Another worker said ominously, "If things don't change soon, other vessels could start burning too. Don't rule it out--our mood is that bad." ²

The woman's plea and the worker's indignation fell on deaf ears at *UTRF*. According to one journalist close to the case, the combination of greed and mismanagement has put *UTRF* in catastrophic financial straits, at least as far as the workers are concerned. Management is another story. "*UTRF* formed somewhere in the order of 10 joint-venture companies over the past two years, with Japanese, Korean, Chinese, European and American partners. Many of these joint-ventures fell apart officially, but have kept working without documentation and have become like private companies for the enterprise management. They just pump resources and material overseas through them and rake in the money. They've all got bank accounts in Europe and other countries."

Baronial corruption compounds difficulties caused by chronic fuel shortages, collapsed supply and delivery systems and Russia's economic chaos. Now *UTRF*, like most of Kamchatka's fishing enterprises, is teetering on the verge of collapse. "*UTRF* is operating at a huge loss right now," said the journalist. "Almost all of our fishing enterprises are. The general opinion in the Regional Administration is that only *Akros* (another one of Kamchatka's largest fishing enterprises) is solvent right now." Workers at the *Lenin Kolkhoz*--Russia's largest fishing collective--also complain that their pay gets withheld for months, and some mutter that their enterprise, once lauded locally as a model of economic success during Russia's 'transition period to a market economy', now faces bankruptcy. They place the blame squarely on management. "Politics, economics, I don't understand it," one worker told me during a recent visit to the *Kolkhoz*. "All I know is, we go out and catch all this fish and crab, and then wind up with no money while our bosses go overseas. By the time we get paid inflation has eaten up our wages. But they never seem to wait for their money." ³

There is little hope for an economic miracle any time soon, and the bitterness festers. The Kamchatka Region is living through a depression of unprecedented proportions. According to one source, Kamchatka's gross product has fallen by over 35 percent over the past two years--more than any other Russian Far East region.⁴ Two of Petropavlovsk-Kamchatsky's leading manufacturers, the Tin Can Factory and the Fish Cannery, have not been able to pull out of the financial tailspin that began two years ago. The Tin Can Factory, once among Kamchatka's leading enterprises, has been battered by rising tin prices and plummeting demand for tin cans. Now a joint-stock company, the Tin Can Factory recently sold its controlling packet of shares to *Akros* in hopes of staving off the final collapse. Even so, it is barely operating now, and many of its workers have been laid off on 'obligatory vacations.'

The Fish Cannery, also a joint-stock company, has farmed out shares to *UTRF* and the private firm *Kamsudo* in a bid for survival. "They were almost completely

unprepared for privatization," said one industry source. While Cannery management sees a way out by attracting foreign partners, the Regional Administration has so far refused to give it the quotas it needs to trade off for investment; in fact, the Cannery recently sued the Regional Administration for quotas and lost in the Kamchatka Region Arbitration Court. The Cannery's only foreign partner is through an Icelandic firm working with *UTRF* in the joint-venture *Tamara*. But the venture produces only a modest few hundred tons of processed fish per quarter.

The fishing industry's troubles ripple through the rest of the Kamchatka Region's economic life. Debt and non-payment have become a way of life. *UTRF*, report fishing industry insiders, owes *Akros* billions of rubles in payments for fish deliveries, and faces court action in the near future to collect the debt. Petropavlovsk-Kamchatsky's Sea Port nearly closed in early December because its warehouses were full of cargo enterprises could not afford to pick up. It was owed 2.3 billion rubles in port fees. ⁵

Besieged economic chaos, Kamchatka's fishermen find little relief when they come ashore. The winter has been unusually cold and stormy so far, and tanker deliveries of heating oil are sporadic. While the northern villages of the Kamchatka Region are reported to have enough fuel, Petropavlovsk-Kamchatsky faces a winter of brownouts and cold apartments. Beginning December 25, the city will go onto scheduled power outages to save energy. According to the local press, fuel deliveries intended for the Kamchatka have been 'confiscated' by other energy-starved regions, "from Khabarovsk to Vladivostok and Nakhodka...Enterprises that owe *Kamchatenergo* will have to take 3 billion rubles in credits [to pay their debts and guarantee fuel deliveries]." ⁶

Inflation puts a heavy burden on the Kamchatka Region's citizens. The average wage here is now about 120,000 rubles per month--but even those earning twice or three times that feel the crunch. One dollar now buys approximately 1300 rubles. The dollar's exchange rate has remained steady, but the cost of living has risen at about 20 percent monthly since August. Many foodstuffs are now more expensive than in the United States. Most sorts of kolbasa now cost over 8000 rubles a kilogram. Locally-produced dairy products are four times what they cost in September. Bread, staple of the Russian diet, has risen to an unheard-of 400 rubles a loaf.

'Foreign foods' have appeared in the city's stores but offer little relief for consumer pocket books. American chicken legs from Tyson Foods (delivered to Petropavlovsk-Kamchatsky in exchange for a directed pollock fishery with Arctic Alaska Seafoods) cost 3000 rubles a kilogram and more. The canned chili, coffee and cookies bought in America by the joint-venture *Holkam* and shipped with great fanfare into the city are twice as expensive as they are in Seattle. Even humanitarian aid is expensive. Recently NATO-issued dehydrated lunches began showing up at the city's Central Market for 2000 rubles each. The presence of these expensive foods fuels

resentment towards foreign businessmen. Frequently, imported food is sold long past its expiration date. People often remark to me that the food they get must be low-quality stuff Americans won't eat. "They dump it here to make a quick profit," is a typical complaint.

The cost of durable consumer goods has gone through the roof. Russian-made television sets go for 500,000 rubles at the Central Department Store, *TsUM* (*Tsentralny Universalny Magazin*). A Japanese Sony costs 1.5 million rubles. Dishes, silverware, pots and pans, coffee makers and furniture cost so much many look on them as museum pieces. Recently at *TsUM* I saw a Polaroid Instamatic camera on sale for 156,000 rubles. As one friend of mine said, "Gaidar and Yeltsin came through here a few years ago and basically said 'we're not going to worry about Russia east of the Urals, you people can all start living on your own'. We've just been cut off and set adrift. But nobody expected this."

No wonder the hard-line Liberal Democrats, with their cheap promises of economic stability and renewed Russian greatness, won in the Kamchatka Region. For the record, 286,982 registered voters, only 126,537 voted--44.1 percent. Of these, 68.2 percent (86,239 voters) voted for the Yeltsin Constitution. Although the less-than-fifty-percent turn-out invalidated the election results for the national parties, votes for the Constitution were counted as part of the nationwide referendum. The Liberal-Democratic Party of Russia captured 24.1 percent of the Kamchatka Region's voters (30,222), followed by the Yavlinsky-Boldyrev-Lukin Block with 15.7 percent (19,670). Russia's Choice lagged behind with only 13.8 percent (17,340).

The results showed a fracture line right down the middle of Kamchatka--with both of Russia's two most moderate parties unable to capture the majority on their own, the Liberal Democrats easily prevailed. But the passivity of Kamchatka's voters was the most alarming result. Recall that the Kamchatka Region came down solidly on Yeltsin's side during the April Referendum. That support has evaporated, replaced by apathy or defection to other parties. As one woman (a bilingual, articulate professional who spent two years in Juneau studying business) told me after I expressed shock that she voted for Zhirinovsky, "What did Yeltsin and the democrats ever do for me? They've ruined my country. I wish they'd all just disappear."

Although the vote for national parties did not go through, the Kamchatka Region did elect familiar faces to the Federal Assembly--Russia's 'Parliament'--which will convene after the New Year. The Kamchatka Region's representatives to the new Federal Assembly in Moscow will be former Chairman of the Council of People's Deputies P. G. Premyak and Kamchatka banker L. A. Grigoryeva to the Federation Council, with 33.1 percent (41,392) and 26.6 percent (33,318) of the vote, respectively. Sociologist I. Ya. Lezdinsh will go to the Duma with 27.4 percent (34,222) of the vote. His closest contender was independent businessman S. I. Sharov, with 17.2 percent (21,463) of the vote. Only one of the new representatives, Premyak,

has a Communist Party background and has been loyal to the Yeltsin Administration. Both Grigoryeva and Lezdinsh have been sharply critical of Yeltsin's politics and economic policies in the past. Predictably, just following the election the new triumvirate promised to cooperate together in Russia's capital and work for the good of the Kamchatka Region's citizenry. ⁷

But what really happens to this diverse group of personalities when they are thrown into what promises to be a highly polarized Parliament remains to be seen. Certainly they will walk into a lion's den; from Kamchatka, it looks like Russia's voters ran the Yeltsin-led reformists off the political high ground and are spoiling for a fight. One of the most striking moments of the election was the December 13 celebration of the 'New Political Year' in the Kremlin. Reformers and democrats gathered to drink champagne and celebrate what they thought would be a huge victory for the President. Their disappointment and shock at the election results became more and more obvious as the evening wore on (because of the time zone difference, I watched the proceedings early in the morning). Pundits gathered to put their own optimistic spin on events; things weren't so bad after all, the Constitution won and it was a great day for democracy in Russia...

In the middle of this, victorious Liberal Democrat V. V. Zhironovsky came walking through the hall where the party was being held. Surrounded by five or six thick-necked cronies, he walked past tables, reveling in his victory and pointing at people. "You're going to be gone once I become President," he said to one. "You're out of here soon," he smirked at another. The reformers at one table hid their faces in their hands like children as his leering entourage strutted by and laughed at them. "This is a wake, a wake for all of you!" he jeered. It was a stunning performance, full of foreboding, broadcast on national television to the entire country.

Ketkino: A Surreal Vision of Modernity

There is always some cause for optimism in even the most desperate times. As Russians love to joke, a pessimist thinks things are bad but an optimist knows they can always be worse. On November 30, 1993, I attended the opening of the joint venture *Kamchatka Pilengo-godo's* second salmon hatchery, located on the Ketkino River about 50 kilometers north of Petropavlovsk-Kamchatsky. The Ketkino Hatchery (*Lososevy rybovodny zavod Ketkino*) will renew the depressed salmon population in the Avacha River, producing keta (or chum salmon, *O. keta*) and possibly nerka (or sockeye, *O. nerka*). The Ketkino Hatchery hatchlings will swim down the Avacha River to Avacha Bay, and thence enter the Pacific Ocean through Avacha Gulf. According to technologists I spoke with at the hatchery opening, Ketkino will raise and release 4 million fry annually, providing a substantial boost to local stocks.

The Ketkino Hatchery--a yellow, non-descript, one-story building with metal walls--would fit unnoticed in any Western industrial park. But in Kamchatka, where

shabby concrete is king, the neat prefabricated structure looked like the Taj Mahal. People in our bus began to buzz as we drove up the dirt road to it. Workers had even cleaned up the leftover construction debris when they left. Set in the middle of an alder forest at the end of a dirt road, with Koryaksky Volcano looming above, the hatchery looked surreal, a vision of modernity and progress in a wild land.

There were about one hundred of us at the opening; some People's Deputies and administrators who helped make the project happen, their wives and some journalists, and a Japanese delegation. The ceremonies featured the usual Kamchatkan theatrics. Kamchatka Region Vice-Governor V. S. Timoshchenko gave a short congratulatory speech, as did the leader of the Japanese delegation. A Koryak group in colorful native dress beat drums and wriggled around in a sensuous traditional dance to invoke beneficent salmon spirits. The day was freezing cold, windy and leadenly overcast. I stood outside with the Russians, turning into a popsicle in my flimsy dress shoes. The Japanese, bundled warmly in their microbus with the motor running, peered at us curiously though the frosted windows. One of them would step outside occasionally to film and photograph their Slavic partners before fleeing back to the warmth.

At last the speeches ended and the yellow ribbon was cut to enthusiastic applause. We stepped into the building. The hatchery interior disoriented me at first. After over nine months of looking at run-down Soviet buildings, the clean wood panels, white walls and doors seemed shockingly clean. Nothing was ripped apart, all the doorhandles were in place and the floors were clean. At the entrance there was an aquarium with serenely swimming salmon fry. The office spaces were dull but functional, as yet unfurnished, and laid with brown industrial wall-to-wall carpeting, the first I have seen in any offices anywhere on Kamchatka. Shiny white flush toilets gleamed like mushrooms in the darkened bathrooms. Everything smelled clean and new. The Koryak troop had locked itself in a room and was singing raucous native songs in drunken voices.

The hatchery plant, a series of twenty or so poured-concrete holding tanks in a huge room, was gorgeous. The workers obviously depended on levels and plumb lines when they were building it. There were straight lines everywhere, nice and neat, nothing left laying around to interrupt their smooth intersections. It was airy and well-lit. A woman handed me an envelope that read, "The Ketkino Salmon Hatchery, Elizovo Region, the Kamchatka Oblast. Construction started: July 23, 1993. Opened: November 30, 1993." This approximates the speed of light for erecting any structure on Kamchatka. People here take longer to build garages for themselves. I tore the packet open and read the juicy facts about this miracle of post-Soviet construction practices...

- "1. Volume of Earth Moved--24700 m3.
- "2. Water Pipes and Trenches Length--1650 m.
- "3. Volume of Poured Concrete--658,4 m3

"4. Erected Structure Volumes--151 tons of steel assemblage, 3080 m² enclosure assemblage.

"5. Area of Recultivated Territory--19800 m²"

An enclosed chronology told a heroic tale. From the October 10, 1992, site selection date to the opening date on November 29, 1993, fifteen important dates were listed, considerably numbered 1-15 for the arithmetically challenged. April 24, 1993, (4.), was a banner date; bold-face type proclaimed, "**Allocation of resources for construction of the hatchery.**" Other big dates--signing of the contracts with Khokye godo-Suisan, the Japanese partner and Feksima Engineering, the Finnish firm that supplied the fabricated construction materials (6.), the arrival of the Japanese workers (8.), the start of work on the foundation (10.)--might also have been in bold-face for more visual excitement. The chronology was familiar socialist hagiography, with a new twist--the plan was overfulfilled thanks to zealous Russian workers and foreign capital. *Zhit stalo luchshe, zhit stalo veselei*, I thought. Life's gotten better, life's gotten happier.

I walked around a little bit between the holding tanks, marvelling at the clean straight lines, the clean flowing water and shiny new metal pipes. A technician in a white smock wandered up and enthusiastically told me about the gravity system for keeping the tanks in water and the neat construction details--"See, it comes out of the ground and is heated with water from thermal springs, so the temperature of the water is always between 4-6 degrees Celsius. The water pressure is enough pump the water up into the tanks, and then it flows down through them, so there's always clean water. And we don't have to pump anything mechanically. All we spend money on is fuel for electricity for lighting. It's ecologically clean." In one tank 250,000 salmon eggs incubated in plastic trays.

On the way out to the worker's *stolovaya* (cafeteria), where a banquet was planned in honor of the hatchery opening, I struck up a brief conversation with Viktor Petrovich Potapenko, General Director of *Kamchatrybprom*, one of *Kamchatka Pilengo-godo's* co-investors. "I remember back in the early 80s, when just one or two of us thought of doing this," he said with obvious pride. "We need forty of these hatcheries, just like in Canada. We need one on every river, little ones to keep us in salmon forever." The Ketkino opening was his moment of glory. "If we've got a team," he cried, "let's go to the *stolovaya* and have a drink!"

The dimly-lit *stolovaya*, converted for the occasion into a banquet hall, quickly filled with happy *apparatchiki*. Champagne and vodka flowed. The tables groaned with red caviar, smoked, salted and fried salmon, fried chicken and salads--all the makings needed for a classic Russian *tusovka*, or shindig. There were toasts and loud conversations. A festive, triumphant mood was in the air, and who could argue with it? The accomplishment these people felt at building something was a real bright spot in the daily run of bad news that is Russia in 1993. "Let's hope for one of these every

year!" "And a good party like this to go with it!" The construction workers, who had considerably been invited, glowed with vodka and good cheer. The Japanese delegation, isolated at its table in one corner with the most important bosses, sent a few representatives to circulate around the room, grinning dazedly at the cheap suits and enthusiastically happy faces of their partners.

A Meeting Of The Uchyeny Soviet

People were singing and joking during the bus ride back to Petropavlovsk-Kamchatsky. Somebody passed around bottles of champagne, specially 'expropriated' for the journey home. The afterglow from the Ketkino *tusovka* lingered with me for a few days. It also piqued my interest in the *Kamchatka Pilengo-godo* hatcheries; fortunately, I soon got an invitation to a session of the *KOTINRO Uchyeny Soviet* (the Academic Council of the Kamchatka Branch of the Pacific Fisheries Institute of Fisheries and Oceanography) on December 7. The *Uchyeny Soviet* met to recommend fisheries catch limits for Kamchatka for 1995 (see appendix I), and to review and approve *Kamchatka Pilengo-godo's* Hatchery Development Plan for the Kamchatka Region.

The *Uchyeny Soviet*--about 30 *KOTINRO* scientists and administrators--gathered in a poorly-lit, chilly room on the third floor of the *KOTINRO* building in downtown Petropavlovsk-Kamchatsky. Yuri S. Basov, *Kamchatka Pilengo-godo's* Science Director, gave the key report on the Hatchery Development Plan. Basov noted that since the Japanese receive salmon quotas from Russia by international agreement, the basic idea was for *Kamchatka Pilengo-godo* to use some of the profits from the fishery to build hatcheries. "Our work with the Japanese in researching their hatchery programs has proven this to be the most effective means of renewing Kamchatka's salmon stocks," he said. "We will also use the hatchery program as a means to train our own specialists and use the experience of American, Japanese and Canadian hatchery programs to our own benefit."

Basov continued in this vein for a while, then opened the floor for comments. The debate quickly became heated and, at times, emotional. Some salmon biologists wondered if the 3-4 degree Celsius water temperatures planned for the *Kamchatka Pilengo-godo* hatcheries would be suitable for keta, which in Japan grow best in water temperatures of 8-9 degrees Celsius. They wanted more research. Others were concerned that the feed base in Avacha Bay would not be able to support 4 million hatchlings per year. They noted further that building salmon hatcheries in Kamchatka's most populated region might not be the wisest thing to do, especially since pollution levels in Avacha Bay have dramatically worsened in the past few years, and show no sign of improving. It was agreed that a working group be created to study these problems.

However, the biggest criticisms from the *KOTINRO Uchyeny Soviet* turned on philosophical issues. Scientists were outraged that they were being asked to approve a program that 80 percent of them had never read. One who had read the program said it sounded to him like "*Kamchatka Pilengo-godo* is a closed circle--the Japanese build us hatcheries so they can fish in our waters, and we let them fish in our waters so we can build hatcheries...what does this have to do with renewing our resources?" he asked. Some scientists expressed the idea that perhaps *KOTINRO* should come up with the conceptual foundation for artificial reproduction of salmon on Kamchatka, and not a joint-venture company. They noted that although Basov cited *Pilengo-godo*'s success on Sakhalin Island (where the joint-venture has also built a salmon hatchery) as a reason for pressing forward with the hatchery program, mature salmon from that program's first release had yet to return, and so it was impossible to predict the effectiveness of the proposed Kamchatka hatcheries on that basis.

The debate ended in a draw, with the scientists agreeing to study the *Kamchatka Pilengo-godo* Hatchery Proposal further and make their recommendations at the next meeting of the *Uchyeny Soviet* in January 1994. While final approval is theoretically needed from *KOTINRO* for the hatchery program to go forward, in reality *Kamchatka Pilengo-godo* will likely continue building hatcheries according to schedule despite the scientists' objections. As Basov said, "We need to act now and not discuss this program endlessly while our resource base collapses."

Taking Care Of Japan's Needs Today And Russia's Tomorrow

At the Ketkino Hatchery opening I was fortunate to meet *Kamchatka Pilengo-godo*'s General Director, Valery Fedorovich Ishchenko. He agreed to discuss Kamchatka's hatchery program me at his office in the *Kamchatrybprom* building. *Kamchatrybprom* and its associated joint-ventures and satellites occupy a squat, ugly five-story building near downtown Petropavlovsk-Kamchatsky, on the shore of Lake Kultuchnoye. The fifth-floor office of *Kamchatka Pilengo-godo* was cluttered with desks and computers and reeked of kerosene from four space heaters. Ishchenko apologized for the mess. "We're going to be moving into new offices soon, in another building," he said. He invited me into his office. We sat down for a cup of coffee and he talked about *Kamchatka Pilengo-godo*'s history and prospects.

"We consider ourselves a daughter of the *Pilengo-godo* operation on Sakhalin Island," he said. "*Sakhalin Pilengo-godo* got started in June 1991 by Evgeny Sergeevich Krasnoyarov, the former Director of *Sakhrybprom*, who is now Sakhalin's governor. He originated the idea, and later passed it along to [Kamchatrybprom General Director] Viktor Potapenko. We're basically an independent operation, but the Sakhalin group is one of our founders." Ishchenko, a graduate of the Vladivostok Institute of Fisheries Management, specialized in shipping before moving on to *Kamchatka Pilengo-godo*.

"There were some problems in the initial stages of the Sakhalin venture," he continued. "In the old Ministry of Fisheries, *Pilengo-godo* was seen as competing with the government and a few *apparatchiki* tried to stop the program. Since the Ministry has been restructured [note: in 1992, the Ministry of Fisheries ceased to be a ministry and became the Committee of Fisheries Management, a non-ministry agency], those *apparatchiki* are gone, and we have found the support we need to begin a good hatchery program on Kamchatka.

"The philosophical idea behind *Pilengo-godo* is simple," said Ishchenko. "It is to ensure the artificial reproduction of salmon on Kamchatka and in the Russian Far East. We need this to keep our salmon stocks at a level to support a sustainable fishery. The foreign participation is by necessity. It's important to understand that the Japanese have been fishing in our waters for over 70 years, and that by international agreement, they will continue to fish here for many years to come. Originally the money paid for quotas went into our own [Soviet] conservation and reproduction programs, but the results fell far short of expectation, since money went to Moscow and then was sent back to Kamchatka. With *Pilengo-godo*, we get funding from fish the Japanese catch. The quotas directly fund the hatcheries."

I asked Ishchenko about the practice of allowing the Japanese to fish for salmon using drift nets (which are banned by convention in international waters) in Russian territorial waters. "I think people greatly exaggerate the damage caused by drift nets," he said. "The situation is far better now than it was. A few years ago the Japanese fleet worked in the open ocean, uncontrolled and unregulated. Then they caused enormous damage to our stocks. Now we allow them to catch 20,000 tons of salmon a year with drift nets, but it's not uncontrolled or irresponsible. The vessels have *Kamchatrybvod* observers on board and their fishing activities are strictly controlled."

"Drift-net fishing by the Japanese has a very complicated history," continued Ishchenko. "For them, it is a traditional way of life and fishing. What is happening here cannot be compared with what was going on in the open ocean, where catches reached hundreds of thousands of tons per year. Then they were wiping out our resources." For the record, the *KOTINRO* 1995 recommended catch limit for the Kamchatka Region and its surrounding waters is 59,955 tons; so roughly one-third of this catch will go for Japanese drift net fishing fleets. By agreement between Japan and Russia, the Japanese have a total salmon quota of 44 thousand tons for the entire Russian Far East.

"Part of the annual Japanese catch earnings from the quotas goes to financing the hatcheries the joint venture is building," said Ishchenko. "We also use the earnings to buy technology and materials, and to train our people. We're still working out some problems with the financing mechanisms and have got to make it more orderly."

"But we're learning. On the first hatchery, at Ozernoi [on the Sea of Okhotsk] the Japanese did almost all of the work and we were the students. At the Ketkino Hatchery, we did the design work with the Japanese, and used 15 Japanese workers on construction along with our people. On the third hatchery, we hope to use only three to seven Japanese workers, plus consultants. They will help us organize things, but we hope to be able to do everything ourselves before long."

The whole idea behind the *Kamchatka Pilengo-godo* joint venture, explained Ishchenko, is to build a series of hatcheries that the Russian Federal government will take over, once quotas have been used to pay for them. Mr. Ishchenko said that the eventual goal is to have a series of hatcheries independent of any joint venture or foreign partnership. "We needed the Japanese partners for their expertise. We're taking care of their resource needs today and they are taking care of ours tomorrow," he said.

"At first we trusted the Japanese to buy technology for us, but now we've started to order our own for the other plants," continued Mr. Ishchenko. "We want to shop around. The Finnish materials we used for the Ketkino Hatchery turned out to be relatively inexpensive, even considering the rail transport costs [across Russia to the Far East]. But now rail costs are very high. So we're looking at South Korea and the United States. We also want to acquire technology for raising sockeye salmon, and start an effective program for them here."

Ishchenko expressed pleasure with the way the Ketkino Hatchery project had turned out. "Officials from the Japanese Ministry of Fisheries were here and they got upset because we have a better hatchery than they do," he smiled. "They said, 'how come we're not making hatcheries like these in Japan?'"

Despite all the positive aspects, Ishchenko noted some problems with *Kamchatka Pilengo-godo*. "We're chronically short of funds," he complained. "We need more resources to finance these hatcheries than we've been getting. So far our Japanese partners have been giving us credits but we don't like being in debt to them. We simply need bigger quotas. We only got 5,000 tons of salmon to fund the hatcheries out of 44,000 tons allocated to the Japanese. It's not enough." When I mentioned the estimated cost of the salmon hatcheries--\$10 million dollars each, according to the *Kamchatka Pilengo-godo* Hatchery Proposal--Mr. Ishchenko shook his head. "That sounds too expensive," he said. "Remember, the first hatchery [at Ozernoi] cost about \$8 million and the Ketkino one about \$7 million. But the Ketkino hatchery was built near roads and relatively good infrastructure. The ones planned for remote areas might be more expensive."

All things considered, Ishchenko considered the hatcheries to be a good deal for Kamchatka, and Russia. "Each hatchery is planned to be able to operate up to 20 years without capital repairs and the upkeep on them is very low. We anticipate each one will pay for itself four to five times over."

I walked out of the meeting with Ishchenko with conflicting thoughts. He kept me at a distance throughout our interview--when I asked him to talk about himself, he said, "Is that really necessary?"--and measured his replies to my questions carefully. When I brought this up with some *KOTINRO* biologists, they told me Ischenko had been a high-ranking Communist Party official before 1991, but that's really no big deal for post-Soviet Russia. Likely his circumspection was just natural caution.

In an earlier newsletter (PHC-20) I criticized the *Kamchatka Pilengo-godo* Hatchery Development Plan on the grounds that, although this is a government-sponsored plan, run by government agencies using federal resources, the Kamchatka Region government is doing little to inform people about it. In fact, they have founded a joint venture company and are basically keeping the whole thing closed from public view, except for a few stories in the local press. I probed a little bit about the monopoly politics involved here. At one point, I told Ishchenko that the state of Alaska only issues salmon fishing licenses to private individuals "to encourage free enterprise and keep monopolies from taking over the fishery." Not a good conversational gambit--I got a black look for that one.

Despite the fact that *Kamchatka Pilengo-godo* representatives cite the successes of American hatchery efforts in bolstering salmon stocks, I suspect their understanding doesn't go too far. When I mentioned some differences between Alaska's salmon hatcheries and the ones planned by *Kamchatka Pilengo-godo*--for example, that our government does not enter into private business agreements with foreign partners to build them--I got the distinct impression that I was overstepping the bounds of politeness. And although he told me he had been to Alaska and Washington State to study salmon hatcheries, when I sounded him out on some elementary details about how the salmon fisheries in those states worked, he clearly didn't know much.

Criticisms aside, the *Kamchatka Pilengo-godo* hatcheries have many positive aspects. The Kamchatka Region desperately needs to ensure the survival of its salmon stocks. It needs the technology and expertise the Japanese have to offer, even if it is acquired by giving up resources. The hatcheries most positive investment in Kamchatka, though, may be psychological. As much as *apparatchiki* annoy me, it is good to see locals making an investment in the future of the region. There is so much ruin on Kamchatka that any construction seems like a wildly optimistic act--we will be here tomorrow, no matter how incompetent our government and how bad things look today. This chutzpah was evident at the Ketkino *tusovka*. During an interview with another journalist at Ketkino, Viktor Potapenko said, "Let Korelsky [V. A. Korelsky, Chairman of the Russian Federation Committee of Fisheries Management] sit up and take notice of what we can do here. They all said we couldn't do it. But we're doing it, we're building the hatcheries! And we will keep building them."

A Conversation At Kamchatrybvod

I noticed a similar attitude of regional pride during my next interview, with Nilolai Nikolaevich Markov, the Director of *Kamchatrybvod*. *Kamchatrybvod*--the Kamchatka Regional Administration for Security and Reproduction of Fish Resources and Fisheries Regulation--works out of a dilapidated wooden building in downtown Petropavlosk-Kamchatsky. The buildings rundown appearance belies the fact that it houses one of the Kamchatka Region's most powerful organizations. *Kamchatrybvod* approves quotas for Russian fishing enterprises, as well as for any foreign company wishing to work in the Region's waters.

Markov, an dark, intense, chain-smoking 38-year old *kazak* (Cossack), met me in his office early in the morning on December 16. During our conversation he was interrupted by countless phone calls, at one point barking into the reciever, "No, I don't want to go to Japan. I'm tired of going to Japan. You go this time!" He slammed the phone down. "I've been to Japan about 20 times this year and I'm getting tired of travelling," he explained.

Markov began by describing *Kamchatrybvod*'s work and his place in it. "*Kamchatrybvod* combines many of the functions of fisheries institutions in the United States," he said. "We regulate fisheries, do enforcement work together with the Russian Federation Border Guards, control and approve fishing quotas and handle the reproduction of fisheries resources."

Markov, a graduate of the Russian Far East Fisheries Management Technical College in Vladivostok, has worked in the fishing industry since 1974, when he was still a student. "I started here as an inspector, worked my way into the *Kamchatrybvod* management by 1988, and two years ago became the director," he said. "I was offered a job in the Ministry of Fisheries but turned it down to stay on Kamchatka. I like it here. Can't stand Moscow."

We talked a little about the Hatchery Program. "There's really nothing revolutionary about *Kamchatka Pilengo-godo*," Markov explained. "There are over 100 fish hatcheries throughout Russia--it's just that these are the first good ones on Kamchatka. I'm all for it. The idea is that we should use our resources to take care of our resources. Salmon is federal property. It should be reproduced by the federal government and utilized by the federal government. In this scheme, *Kamchatrybprom* organizes the production end, and *KOTINRO* decides where to site the hatcheries, based on our site analysis for water quality and the state of the salmon run in a given river. The [Kamchatka] Regional Adminstration confirms the citing and handles the politics involved."

I asked Markov about *Kamchatrybvod*'s enforcement capabilities, since enforcement is among their primary duties. "We have about 800 workers, most of which are inspectors working on vessels and in the field," he said. "The main problem

that we have is pay. Our average base pay is about 106,000 rubles, and with our coefficient for working in a Northern region, it comes out about twice that--only \$200 a month! Of course, it's not enough. Russia's *Rybvods* taken together only get about 4 percent of the total Russian Federation budget to guard all of Russia's waters. It's ridiculous."

Mr. Markov lit another cigarette. I couldn't resist asking him who he voted for in the December 13 elections. "Who did I vote for?" he said. "I voted for Zhirinovsky. I'm not a fascist, don't get me wrong, but I can't hide my disgust for what's going on here."

He rolled his eyes. "Take the situation in the open zone of the Sea of Okhotsk--the so-called 'Peanut Hole'. The only solution to halting foreign fishing there is to either extend the Russian Exclusive Economic Zone to 300 miles or sign international agreements with other governments and allow them to fish in our waters in exchange for leaving the open zone alone. We've been going around and around with this for the past two years, with no resolution. Yeltsin and everybody else is arguing in Moscow, and they've forgotten all about us. Well, while they're busy trying to sort things out, we're on the verge of losing our pollock resources. But the Sea of Okhotsk is a critical resource base for us and we shouldn't have to give up quotas to keep it.

"We've gotten all sorts of orders from the government that we can't possibly carry out. We get a telegram--'strengthen control over vessels leaving the open zone of the Sea of Okhotsk and check their cargo'--but we can't do anything, we can't stop them because the Law of the Sea guarantees them free passage. By international law we can't check them. We have a vessel posted to monitor their comings and goings and fly over to observe their activity. We basically know the situation and the foreign fleets' catching power, but we are helpless.

"Without strong support from the federal government, it's really difficult. The Committee of Fisheries Management has little authority over what's going on with the Russian Far East fisheries in general--it's not even a ministry, it's not even part of the government anymore. It's got no clout. The Committee has lost its teeth. It should be a ministry, a powerful ministry like during Soviet times. It shows the careless attitude of the Russian government towards our fisheries resources. Here we depend on fish for over a quarter of the protein in our diet," he concluded, "and we can't even look after our own oceans."

The Peanut Hole, Revisited

Markov's indignation over the inability of the Russian Federation government to regulate foreign fishing in the open ocean zone of the Sea of Okhotsk is understandable. Joint American-Russian efforts to close another troublesome open

ocean zone in the Bering Sea--the Donut Hole--met with success, thanks to a muscular effort from both sides and an uncompromising American position.

In mid-August, the Fifth Conference For the Conservation of Living Resources in the Central Zone of the Bering Sea was held in Moscow. The United States brought great pressure to bear on the People's Republic of China, Poland, Japan and South Korea to force them to halt fishing for 1994-1995. It promised economic sanctions against nations whose fishermen would not honor the moratorium and banned its own fishermen from working in the zone. Finally, the United States threatened to unilaterally extend its own Exclusive Economic Zone to 300 miles if the moratorium was not honored.

The strong stance swept Russia along in its wake. By a November 10, 1993 Government Decree (No. 1146), "On The Establishment Of A Prohibition On Fishing For Pollock In The Central Zone Of The Bering Sea For 1993-1994, And Measures For Its Enforcement", the Russian government threw its full support behind the Bering Sea moratorium (for full text, see Appendix II). ⁸

But Russia's willingness to follow the United States' lead only underscored its own weakness at solving an equally serious fisheries management problem at home. Russian Far East fishermen's livelihood may be in jeopardy because of unregulated fishing in the Sea of Okhotsk. On October 27-28, 1993, Russia hosted the Second Session of the International Convention for the Conservation of Living Resources in the open zone of the Sea of Okhotsk. The Convention also met in Moscow and was also attended by delegations from the People's Republic of China, the Republic of Korea, Poland and Japan. The Convention delegations reviewed the results of a temporary, joint international Scientific Commission that worked in September in Vladivostok to evaluate the state of the pollock resources in the Sea of Okhotsk.

The Scientific Commission (which was staffed with marine biologists from Russia, Poland, Korea and China) could not even agree on how much pollock the Sea of Okhotsk has. The 'foreign' delegates determined that the Sea of Okhotsk supports somewhere around 12.3 million tons of pollock. The Russians claimed this number is artificially high, since it is based only on observations made in the open zone during the past two years. They placed the available pollock resources in the Sea of Okhotsk at 4.8 million tons and said that "the resources were definitely dropping."

The Convention proceedings show how politicized the debate over the Peanut Hole has become. Pacific Research Institute for Fisheries and Oceanography N. S. Fadayev said,

"While Polish scientists cite their own extremely short research experience in the Sea of Okhotsk's open zone, our laboratory has regularly studied there over the past decades. And not just in one

region, but throughout the entire area of water (*akvatoriya*). From 1983 to 1993 our specialists at 360 [research] stations simultaneously made ichthiological films to evaluate the pollock's biomass. Yearly scientific expeditions for researching the pollock's reproductive capabilities, taking into consideration the [number of] fry and [the results of] acoustic-trawling filming to evaluate the resource available for commercial fishing, allow us to determine the total allowable catch (TAC) and establish methods for conserving the resources, depending on their biological condition and other commercial fish associated with them. At present we have complete data, which definitely testifies to a significant reduction in [pollock] resources, and of a progressive tendency. So we are insisting on a moratorium. We don't see any other [possible] measures in these conditions...

"I should like to add that the difference in data with the evaluation done by the Korean specialists is a result of the fact that they conduct their research in the open zone during the winter. And this is the period when pollock from throughout the *akvatoriya* migrate here. This is a 'hibernation hole', and so there is a fairly high concentration of fish here. But that doesn't say anything about the general state of affairs. If we look at the numbers, this is how it is--if in 1991 the average [daily] catch was 82.4 tons of pollock per boat, in 1992 it's 57.2 tons and less.

"A representative of the Korean delegation began his report by posing the questions--who is to blame and what is to be done? And he tried to prove that the reduction of pollock resources did not result from the catch effort of all five countries, but of Russia in the first instance. 'Russia's catches in the area are four times more than fishermen's catches from all other countries combined. So we can only welcome any unilateral decision to halt fishing in the open zone. But that doesn't mean that this is the way to solve the problem. And by the way, in August we temporarily pulled our fleet out.'

"The head of the delegation from the People's Republic of China, Lian Lin, was even more categorical in his report. He essentially said, 'the Chinese government is against any unilateral measures.'"

V. K. Zilanov, the Deputy Minister of the Russian Federation Committee of Fisheries Management, offered this opinion:

"I think we're going the same way that we went in the Bering Sea. There [uncontrolled fishing] led to the destruction of a huge pollock resource in the so-called 'Donut Hole' during the course

of only 4 years. Today's session participants are the same as then. The fish is pollock and the scenario is the same--drag out the questions..."

Polish fishing in the Peanut Hole drew much attention at the session. The discussions indicate that Russians in the Far East willingly continue to assist foreign fishing efforts and illustrate how difficult it will be for Russia to negotiate a halt to it. Boris Sharopov, Director of Foreign Economic Relations for the joint-stock company Dalryba, said:

"We know perfectly well that Russian vessels participate in bunkering fuel to the Poles and render them other necessary services. This includes tankers from the Primorye Shipping Company *Nizhnevartovsk* and *Beryozovo*. Polish vessels get repaired at Far East shipyards. Furthermore, they get willing assistance in transporting marine products from the fishing grounds. The Poles sell pollock on the Japanese and Korean market, as well as other East Asian markets and in America. And this is something we understand our enterprises could be doing. According to the latest data, hired Russian fishermen are working on Polish vessels.

"Regional authorities have made resolutions on their own level but they can't change the situation. The Council of Ministers issued a fairly good Decree in September. Practically everything is spelled out there, what is permitted and what is prohibited. As well as concrete measures for applying pressure. I'll name a few of them: prohibit port calls into Far East ports by the foreign vessels in question. And don't exclude force majeure methods--the sea is the sea!

"Beyond that--don't provide technical services, don't bunker them, don't transport their fish products. Besides that, prohibit crews changes to fly in on our airplanes. So far the Poles have widely used our airlines for this purpose.

"[Unfortunately] our laws aren't very clear. The September Decree, of course, makes our work easier. But I think that the [Fisherman's] Professional Union must take a more active position and work through it's channels. Who's got the right now to prohibit a fisherman to work for foreigners by contract? The Professional Unions can act here."

The Poles promised to reduce their catch by 25 percent, claiming improvements in technology would enable them to produce more valuable pollock products, such as deep-skinned fillets. But Kshishtof Yarevsky, Director of the Republic of Poland Department of Fisheries (part of the Ministry of Transportation and Marine Management) refused to support a full moratorium:

"We are trying to get out of [an economic] crisis [in Poland], Polish sailors are striking and blockading ports...

"As far as our vessels are concerned, we have somewhere on the order of 30 currently at the grounds in the Sea of Okhotsk's central zone: a vessel will leave, and another one comes. It's easier to speak of fishing days, that's 60-80 to the end of the year. They're working around the clock but the best catches are about 40-45 tons per vessel per day during the winter period."

Yarevsky noted that 18 Polish vessels had been cited for fishing in Russian territorial waters surrounding the open zone--usually by darting out for night forays--and said that Poland would take "appropriate measures" to punish the violators. The bluffs and waffling did not convince the Russians that fishing in the Peanut Hole will end before the pollock resources do. V. K. Zilanov commented,

"Here they [the non-Russian delegations] are trying to dissuade us, but let's get to the point. A huge flotilla, somewhere around 100 foreign vessels, is working in the central zone. In an average year they take up to 700,000 tons [of pollock]--worth 350 million dollars a year. Are you prepared, gentlemen, to make Russia suffer this loss? And still a greater loss, when the same kind of catastrophe that happened in the Bering Sea happens here? If so--I ask you to put in a Protocol!" ⁹

The Russian delegation to the Conference announced a series of measures designed to stop assistance to foreign fleets operating in the Peanut Hole (see Appendix III.). Whether or not these measures (which do not differ substantively from earlier measures and declarations) will have an effect is another matter. Russia is depending on South Korea for economic aid and investment. China is the major Far East trading partner and offers cheap ship repair and upgrades for Russia's deteriorating fishing fleet. And Russia has little political or economic clout with Poland.

The latest Russian declaration is likely to have little impact for other reasons. A weak call for a voluntary halt to the pollock fishery will almost certainly be ignored by the nations having vessels in the Peanut Hole--there's just too much money to be made. Getting a joint-scientific program started will depend on Russia's lead, but economic

chaos has dried up federal monies for Russia's scientific research efforts. Russia can barely support *KOTINRO*, much less scrape up the funding to send three scientific-research vessels into the Peanut Hole--and if Russia doesn't provide researchers, nobody else will. Poland, China and Korea ignored Russia's pleas to slow the pollock fishery's tempo in the past, and will ignore it now.

Whether or not the pollock fishery can stand the pounding for another year can only be answered with time. But Far East fishermen are fed up, and ready to take matters into their own hands if the Russian government does not act soon. The Sea of Okhotsk and the Kurile Islands topped the agenda at a December 15-16 meeting of the Chairmen of Far East Professional Unions in Khabarovsk. Although invited guests from the Russian Federation Committee of Fisheries Management did not come (claiming a scheduling conflict), the Professional Unions nonetheless drafted a resolution "reflecting the united position of all Far East fishermen." They demanded an immediate moratorium on fishing in the Peanut Hole by "foreign poachers", a halt to all agent work assisting foreign vessels working in the zone and acceptance of additional amendments to the 1982 Law of the Sea Convention to strengthen their right to control migrating stocks of fish. Unless the Russian government takes immediate action, the fishermen will declare a "pre-strike condition" on February 1, 1994. ¹⁰

I spoke with a friend of mine from the fishing industry about the meeting's results over coffee one night. "Our representative said the meeting was really hot--a lot of criticism of the the government, anger that the fisheries bureaucrats didn't show up and aren't doing anything about the Sea of Okhotsk. Nobody seems to be in charge. If we lose that fishery, thousands of us are going to be out of work."

He sipped his coffee. "People in Khabarovsk discussed drastic measures to stop the fishing in the Peanut Hole. If the government won't do anything, we're going to have to do something. Some fishermen said we should sow mines or caltrops out there to rip up their trawls. Others want to start ramming their boats or shooting."

"We've had enough--there was even talk that, if the government won't get off it's ass and do something, we'll have to start going our own way and found a Far East Republic. We had one here in the early 1920s. If they won't take care of us, we'll take care of ourselves. We have no choice."

The political *purga* sweeping Russia is gathering furies as it surges across the Sea of Okhotsk. Do not underestimate the anger and frustration the Russian Far East; they are equaled only by Moscow's indecision and weakness. These are perilous times.

All best,



Peter H. Christiansen

Appendix I.

The following are the Kamchatka Region Branch of the Pacific Research Institute for Fisheries and Oceanography recommended quotas for selected species of commercially-valuable fishes for 1994-51. These are the totals for fishery zones 61.01 (the western Bering Sea), 61.02 (eastern Kamchatka), 61.03.1 (the northern Kuriles) and 61.05 (the Sea of Okhotsk). I have not broken the quotas down by zone. All quotas are in thousands of metric tons.

Salmonids: O. gorbushcha, 36.50; O. keta, 8.15; O. kisutch, 3.55; O. nerka, 7.20; O. tshawychsa, 1.005; others, 3.55. TOTAL: 59.955

Walleye Pollock (*Theragra chalcogramma*): Zone 61.01, 200; Zone 61.05, 600; other Zones, 210. TOTAL: 10005

Soles and Flounders (including Pacific Halibut): All Zones, 89

Pacific Cod (*Gadus macrocephalus*): All Zones, 185

Appendix II

"On The Establishment Of A Prohibition On Fishing For Pollock In The Central Zone Of The Bering Sea For 1993-1994, And Measures For Its Enforcement." -- Government Decree No. 1146, November 10, 1993.

"With the aim of enforcing the fulfillment of the agreement on the prohibition of the pollock fishery in the central zone of the Bering Sea for 1993-1994 at the Fifth Conference For The Conservation Of Living Resources And Their Management, and of safeguarding the fisheries management interests of the Russian Federation, the Council of Ministers and the Russian Federation government decrees:

"1. To establish a prohibition on fishing in 1993-1994 in the central zone of the Bering Sea lying beyond the Economic Zone of the United States of America for Russian legal entities and real persons, excluding circumstances when such a fishery is conducted on the basis of intergovernmental agreement, with participation of the Russian Federation and the United States of America. The Russian Federation Committee of Fisheries Management and the Ministry of Security guarantee control over observance of the prohibition on pollock fishing.

"2. The Russian Federation Committee of Fisheries Management and the Ministry of Security will send information about foreign fishing vessels conducting fishing operation in the central zone of the Bering Sea to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

"The Russian Federation Ministry of Foreign Affairs will inform those governments whose fishing vessels are conducting fishing operations in the central zone of the Bering Sea of the prohibition on the pollock fishing for 1993-1994.

"3. The Russian Federation Committee of Fisheries Management will not award licenses for fishing operations in the Economic Zone or the continental shelf of the Russian Federation to Russian and foreign entities and legal persons conducting illegal fishing operations in the central zone of the Bering Sea.

"4. The Russian Federation Ministry of Transportation, the Russian Federation Ministry of the Economy, the Russian Federation Ministry of Foreign Economic Trade, the Russian Federation Committee of Fisheries Management, the Administrations of the Primorsky and Khabarovsk Krai, and the Kamchatka, Sakhalin and Magadan Oblasts guarantee the total cessation of any form of services [to vessels operating] in the central zone of the Bering Sea, and assistance to those vessels, including port calls, fuel deliveries and offloading at sea.

"5. The Russian Federation Committee of Fisheries Management in accord with the Russian Federation Ministry of Justice within one month will present reports on the affixation of responsibility for nonobservance of the prohibition on pollock fishing in the central zone of the Bering Sea, as noted in Point 1 of this Decree.

"-- The Chairman of the Russian Federation Council of Ministers, V. Chernomyrdin."

Appendix III

"Press Release

"The Russian delegation announced that Russian authorities are obliged to undertake a series of measures regarding foreign fishermen, continuing to conduct fishing operations in the open zone of the Sea of Okhotsk. The measures are in keeping with international law.

"--the total cessation of any form of assistance to foreign vessels participating in fishing operations in the designated region.

"--non-allocation of fishing quotas for living resources in the Russian Exclusive Economic Zone to legal entities and real persons, [as well as a prohibition on] servicing foreign vessels in Russian ports, which have conducted or are conducting fishing operations in the Sea of Okhotsk central zone.

"--a prohibition of the issuance of permissions to any foreign fishing vessels for fishing activity in the Russian [Exclusive] Economic Zone and continental shelf in the Sea of Okhotsk, with the exception of permissions granted according to mutual intergovernmental agreements between Russia and foreign governments regarding the Sea of Okhotsk

"At the Conference the Russian delegation gave its participants proposals for conservation measures of pollock in the Sea of Okhotsk open zone:

"1. Cease all fishing for pollock on a voluntary basis until more data is received.

"2. Develop a joint-scientific program for collecting additional data regarding the condition of pollock resources in the Sea of Okhotsk open zone for 1993-1994.

"3. In order to continue scientific observations and receive data regarding the condition of pollock resources in the Sea of Okhotsk open zone it is necessary to allocate up to three scientific-research vessels from each country conducting fishing operations in the Sea of Okhotsk open zone, beginning in December 1993.

"Representatives of countries conducting scientific research in the Sea of Okhotsk open zone may inspect those scientific-research vessels in order to verify their implementation of the indicated program.

"5. Discussion and analysis of the results of scientific research will be conducted within the parameters of the North Pacific Marine Science Organization (PISCES).

"The Russian Federation Committee of Fisheries Management Press Center.

Footnotes

¹ UTRF, or the Upravleniye Tralovogo i Refrigeratornogo Flota (the Trawl and Refrigerator Fleet Administration), employs over six thousand workers and has upwards of 100 vessels of different sizes and designations, from factory processors to trawlers and refrigerator transports.

² Material from a December 17, 1993 Kamchatka Television report. I am grateful to KTV reporters for sharing their views with me during a subsequent interview. According to the reporters, who requested anonymity, The Ministry of Internal Affairs has begun an investigation into the Rybak Kamchatki case. "It is likely the crab can be traced by the available documents," said one reporter. "But the three containers remain a mystery." The reporter also said that incidents of deliveries of marine products to unknown buyers by UTRF fishermen at sea is "rampant".

³ Delayed wages have become a way of life for many workers in the Kamchatka Region. Workers at the Kamchatka Branch of the Pacific Research Institute for Fisheries and Oceanography (KOTINRO) frequently experience up to a two-month wait for their pay. Kamchatavttransport (the Kamchatka Region Automotive Transportation Agency), responsible for much of the Region's trucking, kicked out their General Director in November for expropriating the enterprise's funds for personal travel and the purchase of a fancy Toyota four-wheel drive vehicle--while workers had not been paid since June! Many workers at Gospromkhoz (the Government Industrial Management Enterprise), which produces fur goods, were given 'vacation pay' and sent home for the winter because there is no money to pay them. But perhaps the most frightening story is with Kamchatka's military garrison. Naval officers threatened to march their families onto the runways at Elizovo Airport and close down air traffic in late October. They claimed they had not been paid since June and that their families did not even have enough money for bread! Only drastic intervention by the Kamchatka Regional Administration got them their wages in time to avert the strike action.

⁴ "Russia's Most Important Resource Base", Vesti, December 22, 1993.

⁵ "The Sea Port Is Owed Two Billion", Vesti, December 1, 1993.

⁶ "The New Year in Darkness?", Vesti, December 18, 1993. Kamchatkenergo is the government agency charged with keeping the Kamchatka Region supplied with fuel. Its main debtors are reported to be the military, communal housing organizations and industrial enterprises.

⁷ "Information From The Regional Election Commission", Vesti, December 18, 1993.

⁸ Official Communication, Rybak Kamchatki, December 10, 1993.

⁹ "A Pollack War: Threat Or Reality?", Rybak Kamchatki, December 3, 1993.

¹⁰ "A Strike May Be Announced In February", Rybak Kamchatki, December 24, 1993. The Union also demanded a clarification on the Russian government's position in the territorial dispute with Japan over the Kurile Islands.