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steamed up about Chechnya. It was not just the feeling that it could have been them, but Dudayev had won sympathy here when commanding a Soviet air-base. The Estonians irritated the Russians further by rushing through before the election the new tighter citizenship law. Then came the July deadline for the lodging of residence permit applications by the 300,000 Russians who so far have neither Estonian nor Russian nationality. The Estonians wanted to make them choose. Not all did apply in time, but the Estonians are allowing a supplementary application period to run until next April. Another deadline (for processing) looms in July 1996.

9. Relations were worsened by three long-running problems. The first was the border dispute. The Estonians signalled early in the year their willingness to give up their claim on two slivers of Russian territory, but failed to persuade the Russians in return to acknowledge the 1920 Tartu Treaty as a symbol of the legal continuity of the Estonian state. The 75th anniversaries of a string of Estonian institutions were celebrated this year. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] But at least the sea border has been agreed and the meandering 'control line' south of Lake Peipus straightened out. The two border guards get on. The Estonians are however not optimistic about an early change of attitude in Moscow. Some sort of unilateral declaration may be the answer.

10. The second aggravation was the Estonian failure until December to ratify the two Treaties signed by Meri and Yeltsin in July 1994, one covering troop withdrawal and the other social guarantees for military pensioners living here in worryingly large numbers (nearly 15,000). This issue split all the parties, and it was only at year's end that a decent majority could be found for Riigikogu ratification. The commission vetting these pensioners' residence applications has worked at snail's pace, but began to speed up in September once the very last Russian personnel left (on schedule) the former nuclear submarine training-base at Paldiski. The third issue was the existence of the resident OSCE mission in Tallinn. Despite the fact that its objective reports found no real evidence of human rights abuses, the Estonians continue to regard the mission's presence as a stigma, and they were at their most obstinate when we had to lobby them, twice, about the need for mandate renewal. But each time they agreed in the end.

11. There is perceptible nervousness now about the new Duma. Those few of the 80,000 Russians eligible who did vote, at the two polling stations allowed, went for Lebed and Zyuganov. Estonian officials think Zyuganov may press for a separatist referendum in the heavily Russian North-East, as a border deal recedes. The acrimonious row over the status of the two rival Orthodox churches has reignited. We and our partners need to go on chivvying both sides to be reasonable. But the bankers who see here a significant 'country risk' are right. Meri said in a speech in mid-year: "One of Europe's smallest states is ten times better known now than before the war, and for its good side ... this is the victory of the Estonian spirit and of Estonian