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talks produced some tangible results: agreements on social guarantees for Russian troops; pensions for retired officers; customs procedures and the handover to Estonia of lighthouses, beacons and buoys etc.

9. Only one issue - the border - seems intractable. Estonia claims the 1920 Treaty of Tartu border should be honoured: the Russians that the border existing on 12 January 1991 (Russian-Estonian Treaty of Friendship) should remain. Again the Estonians have been advised by some of their friends that they cannot expect the same unequivocal support on this issue as they can on troop withdrawal. Part of the problem is that the Estonian leadership (eg Laar, Velliste, Deputy Minister of Defence Hannes Walter) are historians by calling. They have no difficulty in resurrecting and dusting off an historical event such as the Treaty of Tartu, blithely ignoring the geopolitical changes, some of them irreversible, which have taken place in the intervening 70-odd years. If they are sensible the Estonians will learn from the recent rebuff given the Japanese over the Kuriles. It may also occur to them that, along with the disputed territory, they would acquire another 75,000 Russians!

10. Estonia could do more to improve the relationship and disarm Russian criticism. The election campaign was fought on a platform of undiluted nationalism by the 3 parties which subsequently formed the present right-wing government. Now could well be the time for concessions to make easier the acquisition of Estonian citizenship. This could be made automatic for anyone born on Estonian soil. And the language requirement could be waived for elderly applicants. It is encouraging that the Estonian Ambassador has been floating both these possibilities in Moscow.

11. The commercial and economic aspects of the relationship with Russia loom almost as large as the political. Russia has traditionally supplied fuel and raw materials such as ores and cotton to Estonian industry in return for manufactures, electricity and meat and milk products. For whatever reason the inward flow from the East all but ceased at the beginning of last year and picked up only slowly in the second half. President Ruutel and some Ministers used the word "blokada" in explaining this development to me while others suggested more pragmatically that it was caused by inefficiency and sheer inability to deliver rather than by a deliberate policy. The cutting-off of the flow of fuel and raw materials allied to the collapse of the rouble