

[REDACTED]

round of talks in Moscow later this month. Potential sticking points are Estonian insistence on regaining the borders established by the Treaty of Tartu in 1920 and her treatment of retired Soviet and Russian officers and their dependants. I hope and think that pragmatic solutions will be found to both issues.

4. The badly drafted Aliens Law passed by Parliament in June and stipulating conditions for non-citizens to obtain residence permits aroused such a storm of criticism from Russia and the West that President Meri refused to sign it and submitted it for comments to the Council of Europe and CSCE. All the proposed amendments but one were subsequently included in a more acceptable piece of legislation. Additionally the President established a Round Table mechanism whereby representatives of all minority groups meet regularly with members of the Government and Parliament for consultations on potentially contentious matters.

5. For most of the year the Russians continued to complain about abuses of the human rights of the Russian community. But this campaign gained little international credibility as a number of fact-finding missions from eg the UN, CSCE and the Council of Europe concluded there is no such abuse. And a Russian-introduced resolution at UNGA on human rights in Estonia and Latvia was so watered down that the Estonians felt obliged to crow.

6. Events in Russia gave Estonia cause for anxiety during the year. The siege of the White House was a worrying time and the speed with which the Estonians declared support for Yeltsin after Ostankino was an indication of their relief at the eventual outcome. Behind their public nonchalance the success of Zhirinovskiy in the December elections has them badly rattled. The joint request for a NATO security guarantee by the three Baltic Presidents the following week was a measure of their anxiety. I suspect they would have striven for an early agreement on troop withdrawal with Yeltsin without the prompting they got from the Americans and ourselves.

FOREIGN RELATIONS

7. Estonia continued to forge closer relations with her Nordic neighbours, the Visegrad countries and her Baltic partners. She acceded to the Council of Europe in May. Relations with the West and with NATO, through NACC, were strengthened. Estonia has enthusiastically embraced Partnership for Peace. A free trade agreement with the EC should be completed in time to take effect from January 1995 to add to the FTA's she already has with the Nordic countries and her Baltic partners. Baltic cooperation became more of a reality with agreements on trade, customs and visa and consular matters. The three Presidents and Prime Ministers met on a number of occasions and issued joint statements on issues of mutual interest. Towards year's end