

Lebed on U.S. tour, meets Bush-leaguers

by EIR Staff

Russia's Gen. Aleksandr Lebed toured the United States in mid-November, on the invitation of Henry Kissinger's Nixon Center for Peace and Freedom and the New York Council on Foreign Relations. On Oct. 17, Lebed had been ousted by President Boris Yeltsin, as head of the Russian Security Council. Apparently, he is seeking to boost his political fortunes in other quarters.

Lyndon LaRouche, asked to comment on the Lebed reception by the Bush-leaguers, in an interview on Nov. 20, described it as "the worst possible thing" that could happen in U.S.-Russian relations.

Lebed's first stop was Houston, Texas, on Nov. 17, where he had lunch with George Bush and his wife, and former National Security Adviser Gen. Brent Scowcroft. Later in the day, he met with former Secretary of State James Baker III. Lebed's foreign policy adviser said that Lebed had wanted to observe U.S. "Presidential dynamics" and that he and Bush discussed "U.S.-Russian relations into the future."

Lebed then travelled to New York City, where he met with Kissinger, and spoke at a behind-closed-doors meeting of the Council on Foreign Relations on Nov. 18. The next day, he addressed CFR members in Washington, D.C.

At the State Department briefing on Nov. 18, spokesman Lyn Davies was asked about plans for Lebed to meet with administration officials, and he confirmed that there were efforts under way to set up meetings. Another spokesman for the State Department indicated to a journalist that "it had still not been determined" who would meet with Lebed. The only decision that had been made, after a formal request from Lebed, was that there would be some kind of formal meeting at the State Department. Asked if such a meeting were "dicey," because President Yeltsin had fired General Lebed, the spokesman said: "Let's not get into that. Let's just say there are scheduling difficulties."

Lebed's sole public appearance was scheduled for Washington on Nov. 22, before the U.S.-Russia Business Council, and hosted by Robert Strauss, George Bush's former ambassador to Moscow.

Jack Matlock, a former U.S. ambassador to Moscow, told a Washington reporter about his own meeting with General Lebed on Nov. 19. Matlock said that he thought Lebed was politically ambitious and wanted to cultivate U.S. contacts. Asked about the former fight of Lebed and Yuri

Skokov, as a "Third Force" against the International Monetary Fund's austerity conditionalities, Matlock said: "Skokov split up with Lebed before his Presidential race. The Third Force didn't gel. It would have been significant, but it fell apart."

(Skokov came to the United States in August 1995; his trip was organized by Dmitri Simes, the same Nixon Center official who organized Lebed's current trip.)

LaRouche: 'a disaster'

In the late spring of 1995, LaRouche explained in his interview with "EIR Talks," Russia was at a turning point. LaRouche told people in Washington that if the pro-IMF policy of the United States were not changed, we would soon have "a real strategic mess" on our hands. In the summer of 1995, Skokov came to the United States—not to meet with representatives of the government, as he should have done, but as a protégé of the Republican Party. "This is a disaster!" LaRouche told people in Washington at that time. "Precisely what I had feared is happening, and nothing has been done to prevent it, or to forestall it."

Today, LaRouche continued, the basic problem is this: "First of all, the Republican line in Moscow has been consistently, either that Clinton was going to be defeated in his re-election bid, or that at least the Congress would be controlled by the Republicans, and Clinton would be impeached. And, therefore, the line was, which the British encouraged—British agents in Moscow encouraged—was that smart Russians would be wise to cultivate the Kissinger-Bush side of things in the United States, and to avoid becoming entangled with the doomed Mr. Clinton, and the Democratic Party.

"Now, unfortunately, Mr. Clinton, by capitulating to people like [Donald] Fowler, [Dick] Morris, and others, did, in fact, throw the national elections, at least on the Congressional side. He threw it, by omission, perhaps, as much as anything, and becoming exactly what the British wanted. . . .

"In this context, Lebed . . . comes to the United States, as he made an earlier trip to NATO, to attempt to promote his political career by the Bushies and by Kissinger, or Kissinger's crowd. And, *this is the worst possible thing*. . .

"The Lebed visit here, in effect undercuts everything the United States *should* be representing to people in Russia. It reflects that, and is doing nothing, on the verge of the worst global crisis in history coming up fast. And, I'm very concerned that Mr. President Clinton get back on track, recognize the mistakes he's making, and correct this kind of error. And, I think the Lebed visit here should be taken, by all intelligent people around the administration, as a sign that those who successfully opposed my proposals on a policy track toward Russia in the spring and summer of 1995—that those people succeeded in making a horrible mistake, potentially a catastrophic mistake, in the U.S. tilt toward Russia."