

## Russia sheds Gaidar, but steps up Third Rome aims

by Konstantin George

Whiplashed by the acute economic crisis, the Russian cabinet's leading shock therapists, Deputy Prime Minister Yegor Gaidar and Finance Minister Boris Fyodorov, have been ousted in the wake of the Clinton-Yeltsin summit which began on Jan. 13. Moscow is witnessing the slow emergence of a new government, anchored by Prime Minister Viktor Chernomyrdin, which will move away from the ravaging shock therapy of the past two years—although what policy will replace it, is far from clear.

Yet whatever happens domestically, the Yeltsin regime's foreign policy goal is to consolidate Moscow's hold over the entire former Soviet Union during 1994, reannexing all the republics along Russia's western borders which became independent (possibly excepting Lithuania, for broader geostrategic reasons). Belarus has in essence already been absorbed. Moscow is now intent on controlling Ukraine, its main target, and the Baltic republics of Estonia and Latvia.

Lyndon LaRouche, asked to comment on the Russian developments in the weekly "EIR Talks" radio interview on Jan. 19, stressed that it is useless to try to dissect the political situation respecting Yeltsin and his advisers. What's going on in Russia, he said, is that a "Third Rome" patriotic ideology, based on the military and the security forces, is dominant. "They own Yeltsin, and they are the backers of Zhirinovskiy, the Rush Limbaugh of Moscow," he said. "What, apparently, Washington generally refuses so far to recognize, is that the Third Rome is not a faction, or tendency, within Russia. The Third Rome *is* Russia: That is, whenever Russia is pushed and threatened with destruction by outside forces, as Sachs's policy and International Monetary Fund policy are doing . . . this forces the Russians into a situation where they view the outside world as the adversary, as a threat to the land of Mother Russia, or, in a spiritual sense, Matushka Rus. Under those conditions, the Russian peasant will rise

with his axe and say, 'No! Russia, Moscow, must rule the world. We must keep these adversaries at bay by having Russian world power domination.' "

### Industry lobby to the fore

The consultations in Moscow over the shape and policies of a new government featured two meetings between President Yeltsin and Prime Minister Chernomyrdin, Jan. 18 and 19, plus a meeting of the Russian Security Council on Jan. 19, chaired by Yeltsin, and attended by (among others) Chernomyrdin and the new first deputy prime minister, Oleg Soskovyets, an industry lobby stalwart. On the evening of Jan. 19 it was announced that the new government had been formed, though only the deputy prime ministers were named: Soskovyets and two conservative figures, Aleksandr Zaveryukhin and Yuri Yarov. From the Gaidarite wing, Anatoli Chubais was kept on as deputy prime minister for privatization.

While no details were released by the Russian media, the key event denoting the new policy orientation was the Russian Security Council meeting, which discussed a program for "the development and production of weapons and military equipment." Russian radio reported that the Security Council discussed "promising new military technologies," and Yeltsin "promised to put them into a concrete phase of production to upgrade the combat capabilities of the Russian Army."

This was consistent with a terse statement released by Yeltsin on Jan. 17. The western media dwelt on its first part, where Yeltsin emphasized the continuation of the "reforms." But in the next breath, Yeltsin said the "reforms" will "proceed from the democratic principles which form the basis of the new Constitution, and especially and above all taking into account the national and strategic interests of Russia." By implication, the "reforms" to date, the Gaidar free market

policies, were against the “national and strategic interests of Russia.” The point was made explicit by Yeltsin’s supposed rival, Vladimir Zhirinovskiy, who called Gaidar’s departure “the downfall of an agent of Washington and the World Bank.”

To understand the symbiosis between Yeltsin and Zhirinovskiy, where both play their role in promoting a Third Rome imperial policy, it is useful to note that Zhirinovskiy, during his first days in Parliament, did not attack Yeltsin. He praised Yeltsin’s decision to have Chernomyrdin play the key role in creating a new government: “So long as there is Chernomyrdin, there is stability.” He reiterated his support for the Yeltsin “presidential system” and the new Constitution, which created a presidential office with dictatorial powers.

### Strike wave looms

As soon as President Clinton left Moscow, the old government’s top shock therapist, Deputy Prime Minister Yegor Gaidar, held a press conference Jan. 16, announcing his resignation. Two days later, the cabinet’s other shock therapy champion, Finance Minister Boris Fyodorov, stepped down. Gaidar’s departure is confirmed by Yeltsin; Fyodorov can only remain if he drops his conditions for staying, namely that credits to industry cease, and that Central Bank head Viktor Gerashchenko, who has authorized these credits, resign.

The main orientation of Chernomyrdin, and his close ally Soskovyets, is to form a government acceptable to the directors of Russia’s major industrial enterprises, to stem the epidemic of plant closures, and to meet the urgent social demands of the industrial labor force, before all hell breaks loose. Chernomyrdin and Soskovyets have been sounding out not only leading industry directors, but also leaders of the conservative Agrarian Party, for possible inclusion in a new government, as the Zaveryukhin appointment confirms.

On Jan. 17, Russian trade union leaders warned that, barring quick government action, a wave of industrial strikes would break out in February. In numerous industrial enterprises, they said, conditions have become intolerable. Workers have not been paid in months. Heavy industry, thanks to Gaidarite financial restrictions, has been unable to pay its bills, not only for wages, but also energy. A growing number of plants have been closed because fuel supplies were cut off. On the weekend of Gaidar’s resignation, Sibpribormash, the largest military-industrial plant in Siberia, was forced to close down after the local power plant cut off energy; Sibpribormash owed it 5 billion rubles. The fuel cutoff may soon spread to the homes of the workers, in the dead of the Siberian winter.

Yeltsin also risks a full-scale political showdown with the new Parliament, more intense with the Federation Council upper house than with the State Duma lower house. The largest bloc of deputies in the Federation Council consists of

industry directors from the provinces, who will demand the reversal of industrial shutdowns and bitterly fight any privatization schemes which would undercut their power as a lobby. Their muscle was flexed in the Jan. 12 initial vote for chairman of the Federation Council. Yeltsin’s candidate, Deputy Prime Minister Vladimir Shumeiko, received 81 votes, compared to 79 votes cast for Pyotr Romanov, director of the Yenissei Chemical Kombinat (Amalgamation) in the Krasnoyarsk region of Siberia. Twenty-four hours of arm-twisting produced a 98-52 victory for Shumeiko the next day. Yet, while the industry bloc in the Parliament is now unorganized, it may coalesce into a coherent majority resistance bloc against the further gutting of industry.

### Escalation against Ukraine

The mid-January escalation against Ukraine came as expected, in a double blow. The first was the Clinton-Yeltsin Moscow summit, to which Ukrainian President Leonid Kravchuk was brought, and forced by the superpowers to sign away Ukraine’s administrative possession of a nuclear arsenal, the cornerstone of Ukrainian security. On Jan. 16 came the long-scheduled presidential elections in the Ukrainian region of Crimea, which has a two-thirds ethnic Russian majority. The results, as expected, cleared the way for Crimea’s secession from Ukraine, and its joining Russia. A clear majority was received by the three candidates who had campaigned for joining Russia. Of these three, Yuri Meshkov led with 40% of the vote.

The Russian leadership wants the tactical flexibility to delay pulling Crimea out of Ukraine until after the March 27 Ukrainian parliamentary elections. Meshkov announced on Jan. 18 that he will face, in a Jan. 30 runoff, Nikolai Bagrov, who campaigned for Crimea to remain as an autonomous region of Ukraine, and who came in second with 18% of the vote. Barring a miracle, Meshkov will win. The next step, as he also announced, will be a referendum on Crimea’s leaving Ukraine and joining Russia, to be held March 27.

During this January-March time frame, parallel secessionist operations in the heavily ethnic Russian eastern Ukraine will unfold. Barring drastic moves by Kiev to turn around the economy, pro-Russian secessionist candidates will do very well in eastern Ukraine, above all in its coal and industry hub sub-regions of Donetsk and Lugansk. Ukrainian observers from Kiev who toured the Donetsk and Lugansk regions in mid-January have confirmed to *EIR* the alarming situation there. The mood has turned against independence, which people have been led to believe is the cause of their misery. There is a broad-based desire to join with Russia, as a route to economic “rescue.”

Thousands of ethnic Russian Ukrainian coal miners have commuted across the border to the Rostov region of Russia to become guest workers in Russian coal mines. There, at wages below what Russian miners receive, they still get three times what they would have earned in the Ukrainian mines.

There is also, month by month, an increasing outflow of scientific and technical cadres from Ukraine to work in Russia.

On Jan. 19, the leader of the Crimean Tatars, the number three ethnic group in the region, Iskender Mehmetov, was badly wounded in an assassination attempt in the Crimean capital of Simferopol, which killed both his driver and his bodyguard. Mehmetov was the economic adviser to Bagrov, the candidate who opposed Crimea's secession. This was the second hit against a Crimean Tatar leader in less than three months. In November, a prominent Crimean Tatar, Yuri Osmanov, was shot and killed.

### **A Russian 'sphere of influence'**

As to the Baltic countries, on Jan. 14, at the peak of Clinton's stay in Moscow, the Russian military command issued an order authorizing Russian forces in the Baltic republics of Estonia and Latvia to "shoot to kill" if "attacked" or "provoked" by local authorities or troops. They referred to a Jan. 10 incident in Riga, where Latvian officials detained two Russian generals for several hours.

Three days later came the strongest imperial statements to date by Russian Foreign Minister Andrei Kozyrev. Addressing a Moscow conference on Russian policy toward the Community of Independent States and the Baltic republics, Kozyrev declared on Jan. 18 that Russian troops have no intention of leaving the CIS and the Baltics: "We should not withdraw from these regions which have been in the sphere of Russian interests for centuries, and we should not fear these words." He called the "protection" of the "Russian-speaking population" in the former Soviet Union "one of Moscow's main strategic interests." The Russian news agencies Tass and Interfax stressed that Kozyrev had specifically included Estonia and Latvia in his definition of regions from which Russia will not withdraw. Again, citing both the CIS and these two Baltic republics, Kozyrev added that "though military domination is not in Moscow's interests, it would be dangerous to create a vacuum because it might be filled by unfriendly forces."

On Jan. 18, Deputy Prime Minister Aleksandr Shokhin reported that he had been offered the post of economics minister, or, as an alternative possibility, the newly created post of "Minister for the CIS," a new position consistent with Russia's imperial emphasis on the "Near Abroad"—the new designation for the countries which were formerly part of the Soviet Union.

The Kozyrev declarations have created a profound shock in European capitals, above all in Germany, and in all the states of central and eastern Europe. It remains to be seen whether European and American leaders will wake up in time to the fact that a drastic change in western policy, breaking with the policies of the International Monetary Fund, is the only way to preempt Russia from becoming a superpower adversary once again.

## **Moscow paper prints LaRouche open letter to Russian leaders**

*The Moscow weekly Opozitsiya (circulation 20,000) the week of Jan. 10 published a letter from Lyndon LaRouche "To Russian Leaders," dated Dec. 5, 1993. The headline included the return address: "Federal Prison, Rochester, Minnesota, U.S.A." Preceding the letter was a short introduction signed by Viktor Kuzin, head of the Bureau for Human Rights Defense without Borders, whom the editors also identified as a deputy of the Moscow City Council (abolished in October). We publish here the text of the newspaper's introduction and the letter itself (subheads have been added by EIR):*

The name of the American economist and political figure Lyndon LaRouche (b. 1922, Rochester, New Hampshire) is not widely known in Russia. The movement founded by him in the early 1970s, which actively exposes international financial centers' looting policy of global expansion against underdeveloped countries and regions, not so long ago might not have attracted favorable interest here, insofar as any criticism of the institutions of so-called western democracy was considered in bad taste among our liberally inclined fellow citizens. Today, however, after "Gaidar and his team" have run roughshod across Russia with their "shock therapy," and consolidated their gains with the October bloodbath, L. LaRouche, with his persistent warnings against the consequences of the IMF's monetarist chimeras—which inevitably and universally lead only to the destruction of the national economy rather than its reform, to social catastrophe, and to the demolition of the state in the form of its rebirth as a mafia entity and loss of independence in domestic and foreign policy—has become closer to us and more readily understood. It is difficult to refute the arguments of L. LaRouche, a convinced anticommunist and a person "from over there," who knows from the inside what he is writing about. Not to listen to them, knowing that their author paid for his convictions with years in prison, is impossible.

Text of LaRouche's open letter:

### **A time of troubles for Russia**

Dear Friends,

My thoughts are very much with you during this time of troubles for Russia, which is also a time of troubles for this entire planet. I wish to share with you at this time a few thoughts, chiefly in my capacity as an economist, which may be useful for your consideration at this time.

I ask you to look around the world with the eyes of an