

coherent force anchored on a KRO-CPRF alliance could have used the Duma as the forum for presenting sound economic reconstruction and modernization policies. This would have guarded against the danger of the popular mandate against the regime being exploited to launch Russia on an imperial course based on geopolitical axioms, an alluring "solution" to the country's existential crisis.

What the lack of a strong KRO fraction means can already be seen in Duma acts before the elections. Zhirinovskiy's support was crucial to passage of the Chernomyrdin government's 1996 austerity budget. For all his noise as an oppositionist, Zhirinovskiy to date has backed the regime on all crucial questions, especially concerning economic and financial policy.

Another pre-election Duma act was the Dec. 8 resolution, sponsored by CPRF leader Gennadi Zyuganov, calling for a referendum on restoring the Soviet Union. It failed by 17 votes, but Zyuganov has pledged to re-introduce it in January in the new Duma. This exercise typifies the extent of British manipulation of those in the Russian opposition, who are inclined by prejudice and nostalgia, to be led to believe that a "Third Rome" road of geopolitical expansion should take priority over national reconstruction.

During the election campaign, Zyuganov (somewhat moderately) and Zhirinovskiy (in the extreme) engaged in populist anti-western attacks, chiefly aimed at the United States. The contrast of these postures with those of the KRO highlights another aspect in which the KRO's absence in Parliament will be felt. It is a tribute to General Lebed, that he did not succumb to the temptation to engage in America-baiting. He rather stressed that Russia's problems with the "West" would disappear once Russia cleaned its own house and rid itself of the comprador groups now in power. He denounced western policies that have humiliated Russia, but did not attack western nations.

Overture to the 1996 power struggle

Russian Presidential elections are set for June 1996. The British oligarchy already has its candidate, Chernomyrdin, as attested in the Dec. 18 London *Times*, which editorially called on Yeltsin to step down in favor of the prime minister: "The man who should draw the main lesson of the election is President Yeltsin. He should step down. . . . The future of Russia is no longer bound to the political survival of Mr. Yeltsin. His own health is still uncertain, and he could now hand over, with honor, to his protégé Mr. Chernomyrdin."

Speaking on election day, Yeltsin said that Chernomyrdin would remain as prime minister. But personnel changes, likely to be portrayed as "reshuffles" or "shakeups" in the weeks ahead, will portend the ultimate demise of the government sometime later in 1996, through either a profound policy shift, or chaos.

Besides the anticipated departure of Foreign Minister Kozyrev, Deputy Prime Minister Sergei Shakhrai is likely

to leave; he has become an outspoken opponent of the Chernomyrdin government, and has Presidential ambitions. Also likely to go is First Deputy Prime Minister Anatoli Chubais, known and hated as "Mr. Privatization," for his role in the bargain sale of Russian firms to domestic and foreign private interests.

Demagogue Zhirinovskiy slanders LaRouche

Vladimir Zhirinovskiy, the unstable Russian demagogue who heads the Liberal Democratic Party of Russia, slandered American economist and political figure Lyndon LaRouche, in a book released on the eve of Russia's parliamentary elections. His publishing a smear of LaRouche has deepened the conviction in Russian opposition circles, that Zhirinovskiy functions as a provocateur for hire. Zhirinovskiy is already widely known as "the Le Pen of Russia," after the French racist radical.

On page 48 of Zhirinovskiy's book *The Last Blow Against Russia*, released Dec. 13, 1995, he writes: "The outward prosperity of the U.S. is the formal entrance hall of a bankrupt, who is being chased by his creditors. Its astronomical debts could not be paid off by honest work. So, what are they counting on? They are counting on the U.S. being able, having first liquidated our military-political system, to seize our country—first economically, and then politically—and turn it into a source of profit. In an interview in early 1995, U.S. Presidential candidate L. LaRouche, the founder of an international network of research centers, stated that 'their [the centers'] goal is to destroy Russia.' . . . If these plans for destroying Russia's economy, liquidating its sovereignty and turning it into a motley bunch of regions 'on their own' are implemented, ours will be the lot of colonial appendages for covering the above-mentioned debts of the U.S. Ultimately, America could seize and sell our land and property to its creditors, the world industrial-financial oligarchy."

The quotation from LaRouche, "Their goal is to destroy Russia," appeared as a headline over excerpts from an interview with LaRouche, published in the Moscow newspaper *Oppozitsiya* on March 1, 1994. Zhirinovskiy and his editors attributed to LaRouche and his "research centers," the goal that LaRouche in the interview had accused leading British figures and the International Monetary Fund of pursuing, namely, the looting of Russia.