Editorial

General Lebed shakes the press

As this edition of *EIR* goes to press, Russia's Lt.-General Aleksandr Lebed has just created an event whose significance will be debated by scholarly historians deep into the next century. General Lebed stopped in Germany, on his way to attend President William Jefferson Clinton's Second Inauguration. There, in a packed press conference held in Bonn's Stadthalle, Lebed had about 1,200 journalists and other professionals standing on their ears for about an hour and a half. In a total turnabout from his earlier public statements in Germany and the U.S.A., Lebed rattled off a cascade of points, one after the other, speaking on Russia's circumstances and options in formulations which witting members of the press corps recognized as apparent echoes of *EIR*'s own Lyndon H. LaRouche, Jr.

None of the important features of Lebed's remarks have been reported up to this moment, in either the British or U.S. press's coverage of the event. We report here a few highlights from the eyewitness translation by *EIR*'s Bonn correspondent Konstantin George. For example, on the world's financial situation, Lebed stated: "There is a growing gap between the mass of goods and the circulation of financial paper, that can cause a world financial crisis, a cataclysm." "Russia is at a point of no return, where the present rule by a criminal oligarchy, and the artificial cuts in the level of consumption, cannot go on without irreparable, irreversible damage." "First, Russia must take into account world tendencies and its own potential and situation. The crisis is a strategic-moral one. There is chaos, no order, no law: Like an absurd theater. Russian society is tired of such a life, of a chaos democracy."

Then, on key programmatic themes of the needed economic reform in Russia itself: "Russia has to proceed on the basis of the Stolypin reforms [1906-1911—ed.], and the reforms of Witte." He stressed as a "positive modern example," the "developments in the Asia-Pacific region, where they developed through their own strength, and not through IMF reforms. We must restore industry in its essential branches. When we recall how the West was built up after the war [World War II—ed.], it was through state regulation of the important branches of industry of the economy, and this was the case even in the developed industrial countries of the West. . . . For a specified time period, we need a state monopoly on foreign trade, with property guarantees for individuals. . . . The State has to make the rules, so that economic life can proceed. The state has to create a healthy *Mittelstand,* which we lack. It is the [existence of a—ed.] *Mittelstand* which protects us from revolts, mutinies, and chaos. It is the *Mittelstand* which invests its money, and which risks its money."

Strategically, while stressing the importance, to the East, of Russia as a link between Europe and Asia, to the West, Lebed proposed "economic stability . . . within the entire post-Soviet sphere." This can be done, he said, through collaboration with "America and Germany." That said, he focussed upon Russia's relations with Germany. "Germany has shown itself a reliable partner for Russia. It has worked to integrate Russia into the G-7, and for the Russia-EU treaties. Germany has given economic and financial aid, and Germany is the number-two investor in Russia, and played a key role in settling Russia's foreign debts. Germany is our biggest trading partner in the West. For Germany, we offer new markets, including new raw material markets." Lebed called for joint Germany-Russia projects for "the exploitation of the potential of the [Russian] military-industrial complex (MIC)," as part of "projects all over the world, using all the MICs for new priorities."

The last time Russia signalled interest in cooperation with the U.S.A. along these lines, was mid-1995. Now, once again, General Lebed, on his way to President Clinton's Second Inauguration, has signalled Russian interest in working with the United States along the same lines under discussion in late Spring 1995. This time, President Clinton should preempt the opportunity.