

# Al Gore and his Wall Street cronies are out to sink Russia

by Scott Thompson and Jeffrey Steinberg

*EIR* has, once again, caught Vice President Albert Gore in bed with some of the nastiest of the Wall Street speculators, plotting behind the back of President Bill Clinton, to wreck U.S. collaboration with Moscow, among other treacheries.

On March 4, *EIR* has confirmed, the Vice President held a meeting behind closed doors with a collection of Wall Street sharks at the Four Seasons Restaurant in New York City. While the precise details of the meeting are not known at this time, there are strong indications that one objective of the gathering was to destroy then-Russian Prime Minister Yevgeni Primakov.

It is known that Vice President Gore coordinated his personal "Get Primakov" efforts with Viktor Chernomyrdin, the former Russian Prime Minister whose personal corruption was covered up by Gore after the CIA came up with a detailed dossier, in 1995, proving that Chernomyrdin had stolen an estimated \$5 billion from the Russian treasury, during his first term as Prime Minister, beginning in 1992.

## Not the first time

In August and September 1998, the Vice President held earlier meetings with the same Wall Street cabal, and promised them that he would do everything in his power to assure that Russia would honor its enormous, unpayable debt to its New York and London creditors. One of the participants in the Gore-fests was David Shaw, the head of the New York hedge fund D.E. Shaw, which had become overexposed on the Russian GKO (short-term treasury bond) market. Executives of D.E. Shaw gave \$40,000 to Gore's exploratory Presidential campaign committee during the summer 1998 Russia debt crisis.

At the end of August, working at cross-purposes with his nominal boss, President Clinton, Gore attempted to reinstall Russia's leading "kleptocrat," his close ally Chernomyrdin, as Prime Minister.

For a period of several weeks, as the Russian debt crisis was playing out in late August 1998, Gore did succeed in convincing Russian President Boris Yeltsin to reappoint Chernomyrdin as interim Prime Minister, after Sergei Kiri-

yenko had been dumped. However, when the State Duma (lower house of Parliament) blocked the Chernomyrdin confirmation on Sept. 10, 1998, President Yeltsin named Foreign Minister Yevgeni Primakov, as the new Prime Minister. Primakov promptly appointed an economic policy team that was committed to reviving Russia's collapsed physical economy, paying back wages, and renegotiating the country's foreign debt.

For his efforts, Primakov earned the undying hatred of Russia's "tycoons," the scant dozen corrupt financial oligarchs, all tied to Western speculators, who had financed Yeltsin's last Presidential campaign.

Gore and his Wall Street backers nearly lost their shirts in late September 1998, when the Long Term Capital Management hedge fund almost went under, as the result of the Russian debt crisis. Long Term Capital Management was bailed out to the tune of \$4 billion, and a systemic collapse of the world financial system was, for the moment, averted, through a hyperinflationary binge by Alan Greenspan's Federal Reserve.

Gore and his Wall Street backers have been gunning for Primakov ever since: Capitol Hill sources have told *EIR* that Vice President Gore's longtime national security adviser, Leon Fuerth, had been "bad-mouthing" Primakov at every opportunity, in early 1999.

## The March 4 meeting

New York City real estate and publishing magnate Mortimer Zuckerman confirmed that he attended the March 4 Four Seasons Restaurant meeting with Gore. But, he refused to provide further details on the meeting, which he described as a "private affair."

Other people who are reported to have participated in the New York get-together with the Vice President included: Edgar Bronfman, the Seagram's whiskey owner who is head of the World Jewish Congress and a leading figure in the Anti-Defamation League (ADL) of B'nai B'rith; Jon Corzine, the outgoing chairman of Goldman Sachs; Steven Ratner, deputy chairman of Lazard Frères who ostensibly runs the Wall Street "rat pack" bankrolling an Al Gore

Presidency; Jonathan Tisch, chief executive of Loews, Inc.; Maurice “Hank” Greenberg, chairman of American International Group; and Lionel Pincus, the chief executive of Max Warburg & Co.

In addition, there are unconfirmed reports that Gore also held a separate meeting with mega-speculator George Soros on Long Island during March. Soros had participated in the August and September 1998 private sessions with Gore.

### **American Jewish Congress memorandum**

*EIR* has confirmed that at least one discussion among at the Four Seasons cabal, was on the need to pressure Russian Prime Minister Primakov, during his March 22 official visit to Washington, about the alleged growth of anti-Semitism in Russia. While there may be some reality to the problem of Russian anti-Semitism, the charge has been often used as a pretext for political destabilizations, by a most unsavory combination of foreign elements, including the ADL, and Russian oligarchs.

A spokesman for the American Jewish Congress (AJC) eventually confirmed to *EIR* that a memorandum had been discussed with Vice President Gore at the March 4 gathering, and that Bronfman et al. had pressed for the Clinton administration to link further economic assistance, including U.S. support for new International Monetary Fund (IMF) loans to Moscow, to Russian action against the alleged anti-Semitic upsurge.

Prime Minister Primakov’s scheduled visit to Washington, where he was to hold his first face-to-face meeting with President Clinton as head of the Russian government, was intended to focus on urgent assistance for the Russian economy, including the renegotiation of IMF loans.

The meeting never happened. On March 23, while en route from Shannon, Ireland to Washington, Primakov was told by Vice President Gore that NATO would not delay the launching of the bombing campaign against Yugoslavia. Primakov promptly ordered his plane to return to Moscow, knowing that, had he been in Washington when the bombing began, he would have been ousted from office.

(This marked the second time in four months that a face-to-face meeting between President Clinton and Prime Minister Primakov had been blocked. In November 1998, as the result of British efforts to force President Clinton to start bombing Iraq, Clinton had cancelled his trip to Malaysia, for the Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation Forum (APEC) meeting, where he was to meet Primakov. Gore attended the APEC meeting in Clinton’s stead, where he staged a diplomatic provocation against the conference host, Prime Minister Dr. Mahathir bin Mohamad. Gore’s outburst was widely read as a vicious attack against China, which had backed Mahathir’s decision in September 1998 to impose capital and exchange controls to beat back the speculative attacks against its currency by Soros et al.)

The American Jewish Congress’s Commission on International Affairs had prepared a memorandum on Feb. 19, 1999, detailing how to hold Russian economic aid hostage to action against anti-Semitism. The memorandum, which has been posted on the AJC’s website, stated in part: “We are sympathetic to the plight of Russia and the Russian people and we recognize the urgent need to alleviate the present distress. But before assistance can be considered, we believe that it is imperative that there be changes on the ground so far-reaching and extensive that they can be taken as a dependable sign of Russia’s readiness to meet its demons, alter its practices, and thereby qualify as an eligible and deserving recipient of aid.”

The memo continued: “Normal life cannot be conducted in a society in which the calculated use of force is so pervasive; and a viable economy cannot be built in an environment in which transactions are frequently either coerced or negated by the use or threat of force. A society in which platoons of bodyguards are commonplace is not likely to qualify for either sympathy or assistance.

“The readiness of Russian society to reject or repudiate anti-Semitism is a measure of the readiness of that society to adopt substantial change. Firm action against anti-Semitism is a necessary and credible indication that Russia is willing to face up to and take on the whole host of problems it confronts in its national life.

“This readiness can best be demonstrated by explicit repudiation of all forms of anti-Semitism and anti-Semitic statements on policies that emanate from or are endorsed by government leaders, including action by the Duma disavowing and reversing its failure to censure Gen. Albert Makashov.”

Four days after the American Jewish Congress document was released, on Feb. 23, the ADL released its own report, “The Reemergence of Political Anti-Semitism in Russia: Growing Anti-Semitism in Russia.” The report led with the case of the same Communist Party Duma member, Gen. Albert Makashov.

### **A flurry of activity**

Immediately following the Gore-Wall Street meeting at the Four Seasons, and the activation of the AJC and the ADL around the new Russian “anti-Semitism” scare, two of Primakov’s biggest enemies inside Russia—“tycoon” Boris Berezovsky and former Prime Minister Chernomyrdin—arrived, separately, in the United States for a week of private meetings.

Berezovsky travelled to New York City, Washington, and Los Angeles, according to a spokesman for the Eurasia Group, a consulting firm that organized his U.S. tour. On March 11, Berezovsky spoke at a conference of the Milken Institute in Santa Monica, California. The institute was founded by convicted swindler and ADL money-bags Mi-

chael Milken. Otherwise tight-lipped, the Eurasia Group spokesman confirmed that “this visit by Boris Berezovsky to the U.S. was another one of his chess moves against Primakov.”

Chernomyrdin was in the United States during March 11-18. At some point during his several days in Washington, Chernomyrdin met privately with Gore, according to the Vice President’s national security spokesman, Tom Rosshirt. “They mainly discussed the status of the Russian economy,” he told *EIR*.

Chernomyrdin also met with IMF Managing Director Michel Camdessus and World Bank President James Wolfensohn.

### **Meanwhile, back in Moscow . . .**

Prime Minister Primakov had been scheduled to visit Washington, beginning on March 22. Prior to the trip, President Clinton had announced that he was upgrading the Primakov meetings to a state visit, and that he — not Vice President Gore — would be holding the most crucial of the bilateral talks with the Russian leader.

For unknown reasons, the Primakov departure from Moscow was delayed by 24 hours. Instead of departing for Washington on March 22, Prime Minister Primakov held a meeting with a delegation from the ADL, headed by National Chairman Howard P. Berkowitz and National Director Abe Foxman. An ADL press release issued following the meeting stated ominously, “We welcome Prime Minister Primakov’s strong and clear condemnation of anti-Semitism. Until today, his was a voice that was missing in condemning anti-Semitism in Russia.”

The press release noted that “the ADL delegation also raised the issues of Russian technology transfer to Iran and Russian-Israeli relations.”

A day earlier, the Hollinger Corp.-owned *Jerusalem Post* published a story about another Primakov meeting scheduled, at the last minute, for March 22 — with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and Foreign Minister Ariel Sharon.

According to Uri Dan, the author of the *Jerusalem Post* story and the longtime publicist for Sharon, the meeting took up tightening cooperation against terrorism between Russia and Israel, following the bombing of a crowded market in Chechnya. Dan wrote, “A top Israeli anti-terrorism expert said the scene in the Russian market place reminded him of the suicide bombing in Jerusalem in the summer of 1997 that killed 17 people and wounded 150.” According to the expert, Dan claimed, Russia is now desperate to cooperate with Israel in anti-terrorism operations, intelligence exchange, and so on. “Moscow is also aware that just four weeks ago, Muslim fundamentalists tried to assassinate their ally, President Islam Karimov of Uzbekistan.” The unnamed expert also noted that the Russian Federal Security Service “is ready for full cooperation, as Israel has had for many years with the United States

and European countries.”

Nevertheless, Dan emphasized that “the Israelis see some ambivalence and duplicity in the Kremlin because of ongoing assistance from at least 10 Russian companies to Iran’s ballistic missile and nuclear weapons program.” According to Dan, Netanyahu and Sharon planned to use the March 22 meeting with Primakov to offer Israeli economic aid, and assistance to Russian ventures abroad, in return for Russia cutting off the sales to Iran.

Dan then noted: “Vice President Al Gore coordinates the U.S. effort to break the Moscow-Tehran aid, and last week discussed the issue with Israeli Minister of Industry and Commerce Natan Sharansky in Washington.”

### **Yeltsin fires Primakov**

After leaving Washington, Berezovsky remained abroad, spending time in France and, according to some sources, in Israel, where he maintains dual citizenship. Russian Federal Prosecutor Yuri Skuratov, whom Yeltsin had unsuccessfully attempted to fire, issued an arrest warrant against Berezovsky in early April, which was widely believed to represent a move by Prime Minister Primakov to curb the power of the Russian oligarchs. Interior Minister Sergei Stepashin, whom President Yeltsin later named as First Deputy Prime Minister, announced on April 10 that he had refused to serve the arrest warrant on Berezovsky, choosing, instead, to allow Berezovsky to return to Russia from Israel and testify voluntarily.

On April 14, President Yeltsin appointed Chernomyrdin as his personal envoy to the Balkans.

Then, on May 12, one day before the Duma impeachment proceedings against President Yeltsin were to begin, Yeltsin abruptly fired Primakov, and named Stepashin as Prime Minister.

While the details of this latest byzantine political play by Yeltsin and company are not known, certain details have been confirmed. According to Itar-Tass, during the 12 hours before Yeltsin announced he was sacking Primakov, he held two meetings with Chernomyrdin, whom he had already appointed as his personal Balkans emissary. The first meeting took place on the evening of May 11 at Yeltsin’s country residence, Gorky-9. Chernomyrdin met for a second time with Chernomyrdin the next morning, shortly before the announcement that Primakov was out.

Subsequently, several Russian media reported that, days before the coup, Chernomyrdin had gone to visit Primakov — accompanied by Berezovsky. The essence of the meeting, according to the Russian news accounts, was that Berezovsky told Primakov that he was “finished.”

Was Primakov’s ouster hatched during the Berezovsky and Chernomyrdin visits to Washington immediately following Gore’s private lunch at the Four Seasons? A definitive answer to that question is not possible, but the pattern of events certainly warrants further investigation.