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WASHINGTON POST
16 November 1986

FILE ONLY

LaRouche, in Secluded Va. Mansion, Details Plot by Soviets

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Lyndon H. LaRouche Jr. greeted the visitors in the foyer of his mansion outside Leesburg, Va., last Tuesday with a firm handshake and a smile. He appeared jaunty in his red plaid shirt, cardigan sweater and brown cowboy boots.

In a 2½-hour conversation, LaRouche, the political extremist and frequent presidential candidate, discussed what he said is a conspiracy of drug dealers, Soviet agents and "Anglican bankers" behind the federal indictment of 10 of his associates last month and the continuing investigation of his group.

Federal officials have said they are investigating whether LaRouche was involved in wrongdoing. But an upbeat LaRouche said that the probe does not make him depressed or angry because it would be unbecoming for a man in his position.

"When you're in a war, and you allow yourself to become angered, you're a bad commander," LaRouche said. Federal prosecutors, he said, "don't want me in jail, they want me dead An intelligence war is going on in the middle of the government. I'm in the middle of the intelligence war."

LaRouche was his characteristic ebullient self, saying prosecutors will fail in their attempts to get him and his associates.

On Oct. 6, a federal grand jury in Boston indicted 10 LaRouche associates on credit card fraud and obstruction-of-justice charges.

The main allegation is that the group took money without authorization from the credit card accounts of LaRouche contributors. Seven of the associates have pleaded not guilty; three are at large.

LaRouche agreed to an interview on the condition that details of the security arrangements on the 171-acre, \$1.3 million estate, two miles west of Leesburg, not be disclosed.

The 14-room mansion where LaRouche works up to 16 hours a day, and from which he rarely ventures because of fear of assassina-

tion, is well furnished and comfortable. LaRouche critics had reported that the group's financial problems, stemming from the investigations, had brought a threadbare look to the eight-fireplace, 5½-bath manor house. But there was no sign of financial distress.

A sunny parlor with windows overlooking the beautiful rolling hills of the estate has a grand piano and music stands. LaRouche's followers give classical music concerts there.

LaRouche calls the property—owned by a financial contributor to his 1984 presidential campaign—the Ibykus Estate, named for a 6th century B.C. writer of erotic poetry who was murdered but whose killers were said to have been unmasked by a flock of cranes that followed them.

In an interview in the mansion's book-lined study, LaRouche returned repeatedly to those supposedly plotting his murder—the Soviets, the Justice Department, world bankers, dope dealers, the Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith.

LaRouche did not provide much evidence for his charges, but he dispensed his alarming statements and his often obscure analysis of world events with wit and a wave of his pipe.

LaRouche, 64, calls himself "the old geezer." He looks fit and seems at ease in his easy chair, next to his tail-wagging Irish setter. "I've led a good life, a clean life," LaRouche said in his thick New England accent. But he has no plans to retire.

"In 1988, I could be elected president," he said.

LaRouche's stay at Ibykus could end soon if his group and the estate's owner of record, Oklahoma oilman David Nick Anderson, fail to come up with several hundred thousand dollars this week, sources said. Under terms of the 1985 sale, they had to pay the estate's sellers \$900,000 on Sept. 3, but they failed to make the payment. Since then, the group has paid a portion of the debt and negotiated an extension on foreclosure until yesterday, but it still owes some money, the sources said.

"I don't think that's a problem," LaRouche said. "If I leave here, it will most likely be for other reasons."

LaRouche said the federal investigation—plus probes by at least 10 states, including Maryland and Virginia, into allegations of improper fund-raising—have cost the group several million dollars. The group is paying huge lawyers' fees and has lost potential contributions because donors now are reluctant to give money, LaRouche said.

"In terms of operating income, there's real hurt," said LaRouche, who characterized the investigations as "financial warfare on a massive scale."

Lawsuits for unpaid bills and other debts are mounting against the group in Loudoun County Courthouse and elsewhere. The federal government is seeking more than \$21 million in fines for contempt of court for failing to respond to subpoenas from the Boston grand jury.

After the indictment, LaRouche's associates first refused to speak to a Washington Post reporter because of what they considered to be unfair news coverage, and they later suggested that they would release details of the group's dealings with federal government officials that they considered sensitive.

They said in public statements that if the government persists in the prosecution, they might release information about their dealings with intelligence agencies that would be so embarrassing that the probes would be stopped.

But LaRouche made no such revelations in the interview. He mainly discussed conversations he said that he and his followers had with officials in the National Security Agency during President Reagan's first term. Some of the talks dealt with Reagan's space-based missile defense program, the Strategic Defense Initiative or "Star Wars," LaRouche said.

LaRouche said his role in Star Wars prompted the Soviets to order the indictments against his followers.

While some of his comments seemed grandiose ("we designed the SDI"), it is true that for years before Reagan announced the Star Wars program in early 1983, the LaRouche group had done extensive research into the technology and in related aspects of fusion energy.

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Sources said that investigators are finding valuable material in the two truckloads of documents removed from LaRouche headquarters in Leesburg last month. Four LaRouche associates, including top aides Edward Spannaus and Robert Greenberg, have been subpoenaed to provide handwriting samples or give testimony, the sources said.

Sources have said that prosecutors hope that LaRouche associates—such as Jeffrey and Michele Steinberg, held without bond on obstruction-of-justice charges for a month until their release Friday—will give information to prosecutors. But LaRouche said that is unlikely.

LaRouche said his followers are strong, clean living and "not hedonistic" and will not bend to prosecutors. "Most of them have plenty of stamina."

Asked whether prosecutors might eventually destroy him or his organization, LaRouche compared himself to Vo Nguyen Giap, the North Vietnamese general whose troops proved to be so troublesome to the United States in the Vietnam War. He alluded to U.S. officials' overly optimistic statements then that there was "light at the end of the tunnel" for American involvement there.

"The government can see the light at the end of the tunnel on me" in its prosecution, LaRouche said. "All right, they said it about Giap," he said. "And the United States was losing the war all along."