

Lebedev Eyes Wikileaks Link in Bank Raid

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The  **Moscow Times**

Billionaire Alexander Lebedev said a police raid on his bank might be connected with a series of interviews his Novaya Gazeta newspaper has held with Wikileaks' founder, who has promised to publish sensitive information about Russian officials.

"It is just a guess — one of the possibilities," Lebedev told Britain's Mail on Sunday newspaper.

Lebedev said a "young, talented and brave" reporter had met Wikileaks founder Julian Assange in Sweden and conducted several telephone interviews with him.

He did not identify the reporter or provide information about the interviews.

Masked and armed police officers raided Lebedev's National Reserve Bank on Nov. 2.

Lebedev spokesman Artyom Artyomov said the banker was unavailable for comment Monday but said any link between the raid and Novaya Gazeta's interviews with Assange was unlikely.

Artyomov hung up without elaborating further.

Assange, who is under fire from the U.S. government for releasing classified information about military operations in Afghanistan and Iraq, told reporters in Switzerland earlier this month that he also had sensitive information about Russian officials that he planned to publish on his web site.

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