

Bolotnaya Activists Planned to Build 'Maidan' Camp in Moscow

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A demonstration in central Moscow in support of the Bolotnaya defendants.

A Bolotnaya protester who made a plea agreement with prosecutors has testified in the trial of his co-defendants that the group was planning to set up a Ukraine-style protest camp in central Moscow.

At the trial of activists Sergei Udaltsov and Leonid Razvozzhayev, who are charged with organizing riots at an anti-Kremlin protest that took place at Bolotnaya Ploshchad in May 2012, Konstantin Lebedev also said the protest organizers had received more than \$150,000 from their backers, Novaya Gazeta reported.

Some of the money was handed over by a Georgian diplomat in Lithuania, Lebedev said, echoing the Kremlin's accusations that anti-government demonstrations in Russia are supposedly funded by Western and pro-Western governments.

Lebedev, whose plea bargain last spring earned him a 2.5-year prison sentence instead of the maximum 10-year sentence he was facing, said his fellow protesters were planning to set up a "micro-Maidan" tent camp — referring to the location and symbol of Ukraine's anti-government protests.

"We were ready for massive disorder, because a 'micro-Maidan' was inevitably going to lead to some kind of consequences," Lebedev said, Interfax reported.

"As for massive disorder, we are not hooligans, we did not want anything like that. We understood that clashes may take place, but we were not going to create them intentionally," he said.

As the clashes broke out before any kind of a protest camp was set up, Lebedev blamed the violence on the "irresponsible actions of the liberal junta."

Lebedev pointed out opposition leaders Alexei Navalny, Boris Nemtsov, Garry Kasparov and Yevgenia Chirikova as the main culprits, Interfax reported.

"These are the people who made decisions. But maybe there was somebody else as well," Lebedev said.

Fellow protesters have called Lebedev a "traitor" for making a plea agreement with the prosecution. But he has countered by saying the accusations come from people who have never faced "anything scarier than diarrhea," and that he had to accept a shorter prison sentence instead of serving out 10 years and "being left with no health and no teeth."

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