

Eye on Washington by Stanley Ezrol

Haig eschews my inference

At an Oct. 20 White House press conference on the Cancún summit, I asked Alexander Haig, who had just attacked the growth of protectionist measures, if he denied the value of protectionism, which was a founding principle of his Republican Party, in the development of the U.S. economy. As he confessed his inability to understand my question—as well as his ignorance of the central economic policy debate in the historical development of the United States by replying, “I would eschew your inference that protectionism was founded by the Republican Party”—the normally loud-mouthed ABC-TV White House correspondent, Mr. Sam Donaldson, whispered, “It was, it was.” It is now rumored that Donaldson may be sacked from ABC for “insufficient ignorance of American history,” and “knowledge unbecoming to a national newscaster.” Haig, who has always enjoyed watching himself on television, or anywhere else, is said to possess the qualifications ABC is seeking. My reply to Haig was, “If you deny the history of the United States, you are a disgrace to the nation.” I am prepared to offer that judgment to any private-sector employer seeking a man of Haig’s qualifications.

A Cancún forecast

John Sewell, President of Father Theodore Hesburgh’s think tank, the Overseas Development Council, which supports the Willy Brandt-Socialist International approach to North-South questions, said that he expects Cancún to end just as Ottawa did. The participants will leave feeling they had reached President Reagan with a new un-

derstanding for their needs, but on the plane homeward, as they reach for their wallets, they will be gone.

Second chance

Henry Precht, whose comment on his own removal from the State Department’s Iran Desk after leading the Iran Working Group through 18 months of the hostage crisis was, “I suppose you’re only allowed to lose a country once in your career,” is at it again. Precht, who maintained contact with the Islamic fundamentalist and Socialist International-linked opposition to the Shah for about four years prior to the Khomeini takeover, is now Deputy Chief of Mission at the U.S. Embassy in Cairo, Egypt. The Egyptian allies of Precht’s Iranian friends, the assassins of Anwar Sadat, are now involved in massive attacks on the Egyptian government. Maybe Haig isn’t such a toughie after all; he seems to want to give Precht a second chance.

A.I.M. spikes

The Spike, the Arnaud de Borchgrave-Robert Moss pornographic fiction about Soviet “disinformation” measures, became a bestseller only with the assistance of Accuracy in Media, the Unification Church-interlinked “conservative” press group which purchased and distributed 40,000 copies.

Who’s leading the team?

At the Oct. 16-17 Baltimore meeting of the Democratic National Strategy Council, Ted Kennedy’s comment on a call for the barring of strikes, the elimination of cost of living increases, and other measures against workers’ incomes was, “I think a little belt-tightening is absolutely necessary.” Kennedy, to his limited credit, did express concern about the Volcker policy of

maintaining super-high interest rates. Asked what he, as a leader of Congress, would do to lower interest rates, Kennedy said, “I think the President should sit down with the President of the Federal Reserve and tell him to lower interest rates.”

Reminded that the President has repeatedly affirmed his support for Volcker’s high interest-rate policy, Kennedy said, “I realize that, but I think the President should sit down with the Chairman of the Federal Reserve and tell him to lower interest rates.” Being told that unless Congress acts, neither it nor the President has the power to force any positive action from Volcker, Kennedy repeated, “I realize that, but I think the President should sit down with the Chairman of the Federal Reserve.”

Senate Minority Leader Robert Byrd responded to the Democratic calls for slashing middle-class incomes with a call for “a blue ribbon commission . . . to put together an incomes policy.” When he was told that this was totally contrary to the wishes of the Democratic Party’s middle-income constituency, Byrd said, “I think we need a blue ribbon commission.”

House Majority Leader, Tip O’Neill said he was just listening to what people had to say and would have no comment on any of the strategies proposed. Asked if he would support action to encourage the resignation of Federal Reserve Chairman Paul Volcker, he said, “The Democratic Party will not obstruct any policies of the Reagan administration.” Reminded of the growing bipartisan opposition to the Volcker high interest-rate policies, and the obvious need for a national leadership to modify the Reagan policies, Tip replied, “The Democratic Party will not obstruct any policies of the Reagan administration.” No one bothered to ask him about AWACS in this light.