

Administration sidetracked from the strategic crisis?

by Richard Cohen

White House sources report that during September a group of senior Reagan advisers succeeded in increasing proposed funding for beam weapons and related anti-ballistic missile technologies from \$1 billion to \$8-\$10 billion. This enormous increase in the administration's funding request will be conveyed in a public campaign for the defense program, incorporated into the President's re-election effort, other sources say.

The President emphasized his administration's dedication to what is expected to be a fiscal year 1985 defense budget request of over \$300 billion in his otherwise slavishly obedient speech before the annual meeting of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) in Washington, D.C. on Sept. 27. There, the President warned that the United States shouldered extraordinary burdens for the West as a whole, and therefore must not subject itself to the budget cuts repeatedly demanded by Kissinger intimate Jacques de Larosière, the IMF's executive director.

Yet the President has still refrained from launching a "crash program" for ABM system development, the full mobilization of U.S. industrial and human resources which alone could generate a real economic recovery and force the Soviet Union to come to the negotiating table in good faith, to work out agreements governing a new age of Mutually Assured Defense. Instead, White House sources emphasize that the campaign for defensive weapons systems will remain limited and will be placed within a public administration push for arms control.

The White House's illusions

The White House is operating under two dangerous influences. First is the foolish belief in "the recovery" which has

been cooked up by the statistical wizards at the Federal Reserve and the Commerce Department. Second is the pernicious influence of Henry Kissinger and associates, including Britain's Lord Peter Carrington, who argue that since the United States is "recovering," whereas the Soviet empire is allegedly "crumbling" from its economic and other weaknesses, the Reagan White House should emphasize Kissinger-style arms control maneuvers, while simultaneously carrying out clever operations to hasten the expected fissuring of the Warsaw Pact.

The effect of these policies will be to make World War III more likely, while preventing the United States from launching the only measures which could enable it to survive economically and militarily.

Washington sources warn that the President's political advisers are coming more and more under the influence of White House Chief of Staff James Baker III, who will, after the President's expected November re-election bid announcement, become the key in-house campaign adviser to the President, replacing Ed Rollins, who will move out to run the President's re-election committee. Baker and his coterie of political advisers and pollsters have reportedly already laid down the law that the President must, from now through the 1984 election, underplay any sense of strategic or economic crisis, calm popular fears, and continuously emphasize "peace."

In an attempt to shift U.S. policy in the direction of the required "crash program," EIR founder Lyndon H. LaRouche, Jr., the advisory board chairman of the National Democratic Policy Committee (NDPC) political action committee, issued a statement Sept. 26 officially announcing his candidacy for the Democratic Party presidential nomination.

In his announcement (see page 49), LaRouche stressed that his effort would be measured in his campaign's influence on official policy during the remaining months of 1983 and during 1984—even before the presidential elections. Identifying a crash program for defensive weapons technologies as the only shock that might sober the Soviet leadership, and as the way to a capital-investment- and export-dominated recovery, LaRouche called the speech of Democratic National Committee chairman Charles T. Manatt on Sept. 20 at Georgetown University the precipitant to his announcement of his candidacy.

Manatt's speech put the Democratic Party and all its announced candidates on record in favor of a "mutual and verifiable nuclear freeze." Despite the Soviet shootdown of Korean Air Lines flight 007, Manatt said, "the seven distinguished candidates currently seeking our party's nomination understand something which the present occupant of the White House does not: that arms control is vital to the security of this nation. . . . Contrary to the Reagan Republican Party's continued opposition to halting the arms race now, the Democratic Party calls for a mutual and verifiable freeze on the testing, production, and deployment of nuclear weapons now."

Manatt's speech commemorated the 20th anniversary of the Limited Nuclear Test Ban Treaty—the first formal arms-control success of the notorious Pugwash Conference supervised by former New York governor and party patriarch Averell Harriman, who flanked Manatt on the podium, along with Georgetown's Father Healy, an intimate of the American Catholic Bishops who earlier issued a letter in support of the freeze and have now jumped on board for presidential candidate Walter Mondale's effort.

The Harrimanites meanwhile threatened to press the War Powers Act against limited U.S. attempts to defend the sovereignty and integrity of Lebanon against Soviet-supported destabilization. Leading Senate Democrats joined by columnist Joseph Kraft, who is a Trilateral Commission executive board member, even demanded the immediate withdrawal of U.S. troops from that embattled country, to be replaced by troops under the direction of the United Nations—over whose operations Andropov holds a veto.

The arms control track

One day after Manatt's speech, a business partner in Kissinger Associates, Inc., Brent Scowcroft, called together his Capitol Hill collaborators to join him in pressuring National Security Adviser William Clark to authorize further presidential arms control concessions. Backing Scowcroft were those who made his Scowcroft Commission Report on the MX missile passable on the Hill earlier this year, including Senate Foreign Relations Chairman Charles Percy (R-Ill.), Sen. William Cohen (R-Me.) and Sen. Sam Nunn (D-Ga.), the authors of the Scowcroft Commission's sister proposal for strategic "build-down," a radical attempt to reduce the numbers of strategic missiles by retiring two for every

new one deployed. Les Aspin (D-Wis.) and Albert Gore (D-Tenn.), the two liberal Democrats who led the House fight for the Scowcroft-amended MX missile, along with Rep. Norman Dicks (D-Wash.), were there as well.

According to a source present at this meeting, Clark was told that the crucial Hill group would not support the MX program when it comes up next month for approval of production funds if the White House did not accept eight principles to be included in the U.S. START (Strategic Arms Reduction Talks) position; most points centered on the "build-down" concept. On Sept. 27, Clark reportedly agreed, indicating that the administration would soon officially include "build-down" in its START proposals.

On Sept. 22, the President issued another statement on arms control through press spokesman Larry Speakes, indicating that Paul Nitze, chief U.S. negotiator at the intermediate-range nuclear force (INF) talks in Geneva, had been given new negotiating instructions providing greater flexibility. Earlier in September, after the KAL shootdown, Socialist International leader and former Austrian Chancellor Bruno Kreisky had threatened in a letter to Reagan that European youth would turn to rebellion if the December target date for stationing of Pershing II missiles were not postponed. Reagan quickly rejected Kreisky's argument, but pressure escalated from French President Mitterrand as well as Italian Prime Minister Craxi, as the President was warned to consider the fragility of the West German Kohl government in the face of an increasingly violent "peace movement." Indeed, Reagan's new INF position emerged after intense consultations with Europe and Japan. On Sept. 26, the President made the adjustments public in a speech before the United Nations.

At the State Department Sept. 24 a top-level meeting took place whose aim was to try re-establish the Kissingerian arms-control track that was under way before the Soviet downing of KAL 007. Attending were Secretary of State George Shultz and a host of Kissingerites including Helmut Sonnenfeldt, Brent Scowcroft, William Hyland, Lawrence Eagleburger, and Richard Burt. Leaks from the meeting and a Sept. 25 Hyland op-ed in the *Washington Post* revealed a great deal of worry about the obvious rise in influence of the Soviet military since the KAL incident—and at least as much concern that the shootdown had torpedoed the expected emergence of Henry Kissinger as chief East-West negotiator, a role carefully constructed and choreographed by Shultz and Kissinger's coterie.

President Reagan is not seen by these circles as a major obstacle to a return to Kissingerian diplomacy—if anything, it is the situation in the Soviet Union that presents the block. Kissinger, in a statement to *The New York Times* published Sept. 30, said that he had expected improved U.S.-Soviet relations before the KAL incident. "But I am afraid that Soviet conduct since the airplane shootdown has largely shown such rigidity and such suspicions that I am beginning to wonder if we may not get into a prolonged period of cooling relations. It may be harder to break out of than I originally

thought.” Kissinger added that the Soviet handling of the incident “showed a preponderance of the military.” Hyland reports: “We have seen how the Soviet regime handles a crisis without Leonid Brezhnev. It does not inspire confidence; in fact, it is downright scary.” The wishful line that Hyland and his cohorts have come up with is that Andropov, who has rarely appeared in public recently, is a clever maneuverer who is distancing himself from the military, setting the generals up for his own factional advantage. But Andropov will deal!

What hokum! The Soviet marshals are determining policy, based on what they emphasize are military considerations, and Andropov speaks only with their approval. The shutdown of KAL 007 was not an “accident” or an action by a “trigger-happy regional commander”; it was a probing of Western responses, and a shutdown of any acceptable détente or arms control terms. Yet Kissinger’s fairy tales are spreading throughout Washington.

White House sources have recently confided to me that senior White House intelligence estimates now are that the likelihood of a START or INF agreement before the 1984 elections is virtually zero. Yet because of “domestic political considerations,” the President and his close adviser William Clark reportedly believe that the KAL incident provides them room within which they could make relatively mild concessions in both their START and INF positions, while simultaneously pursuing the rearmament program and the defensive technologies effort. U.S. START negotiator Edward Rowny gave an interview to the *Washington Post* published on Sept. 21 in which he insisted that the White House was pushing progress in the Geneva arms control negotiations as a top priority.

Even National Security Adviser Clark, certainly no Kissingerite, revealed in his Sept. 18 *Washington Post* op-ed a dangerously mistaken view of Andropov’s intentions. Apparently Clark believes that Andropov is wedded to the idea of a summit with Reagan by early next year, and that Soviet propagandists will manipulate the post-KAL environment to show that a meeting between the two heads of state is necessary in order to avoid more dangerous “accidents” due to misunderstanding. What Clark fails to understand is that this Soviet leadership has no interest in arms control and certainly no interest in détente.

Sending out dangerously wrong signals to Moscow while appeasing Harriman and Kissinger, Reagan and his intimates believe that they can pay the required political price for both the MX and the Pershing II missile, while at the same time fulfilling Baker’s electoral requirements—to prove that the President is not a “warmonger,” assuaging “women’s fears” to close the “gender gap,” placating the environmentalists, and generally deflecting any sense of emerging strategic crisis. Compromising on these questions has clouded an already faulty perception of the intentions of the Andropov leadership at the White House.

‘Crumbling Soviet empire’?

Opponents of the State Department, including a significant number of Pentagon officials, U. N. Ambassador Jeane Kirkpatrick and her staff, Vice-President George Bush, and other White House personnel, reportedly believe that the KAL incident provides them with ammunition for attacking what they believe to be the primary vulnerability of the Soviet empire—the state of the Soviet economy.

They apparently think the Soviet leadership will be forced to be reasonable if internal economic problems threaten a fatal destabilization of the Soviet empire. My sources report that a three-pronged strategy to accomplish this is now under discussion within the administration. First they point to the speech delivered by George Bush in Vienna Sept. 21, following his tour of Northern Africa and Eastern Europe. Bush proclaimed the new Brzezinski-style administration policy of “differentiation” in dealing with Eastern European countries and other Soviet allies. For those who would open doors to the West economically and politically, Bush offered economic and trade benefits. For those who do not, there will be nothing, identifying the two most likely candidates for aid as Romania and Hungary. But, instead of making the Soviets more “reasonable” or helping Eastern Europe become more independent, this substitute for a beam-weapons drive would probably end up strengthening Andropov’s efforts to keep a grip on Comecon, while providing an opening for saboteurs of Eastern Europe like the large element of Polish Solidarity that has been controlled by the KGB.

Second, my sources suggest that a policy of additional economic and related penalties for Soviet allies is under discussion.

Initially following the KAL incident, elements in the Pentagon suggested—as they had one year ago—that Poland be declared in default on its debt. This was nixed at the higher levels of the administration. My sources suggest that two Soviet clients to now be targeted for such economic pressure will be Nicaragua and Cuba.

Finally, additional aid to U.S. allies and direct confrontation with the Soviets or their proxies are under consideration. Some suggest that countries like Zaire—which currently has 1,500 troops in Chad and is working closely within the scope of the Israeli Lavie jet project, and which traditionally has a tough time getting aid on Capitol Hill—will receive such increased aid. Turkey is another candidate. Reportedly under discussion for more favorable treatment was Pakistan, but this was ruled out since the administration did not wish to enter the 1984 election race overly dependent upon leaders whose positions are as precarious as those of Zia ul-Haq of Pakistan or President Marcos of the Philippines.

No maneuvers around aid, no “perception games,” will overcome the current threat to national security. Until the White House commits itself to a World War II-scale mobilization for in-depth beam-weapons-centered defense systems, America is in danger.