

## Editorial

# After Shultz, what?

There is hardly a newspaper in the United States or Western Europe which has not taken the occasion of the disaster unfolding in Lebanon to say a few words over the political grave of U.S. Secretary of State George Shultz. It has been generally acknowledged, in Washington as well as around the world, that Shultz is a very lame duck indeed.

It has equally strongly been asserted, however, and this from administration sources as well as the media, that Shultz will not be replaced until after the 1984 elections.

The question looms: Who, or what, will fill the policy vacuum between now and then?

Looking at the foreign policy disaster which has been visited upon the administration in Lebanon through the election prism, President Reagan and his loyal advisers are clearly aware that changes have to be made. They realize that the Shultz approach, also well known to be the Kissinger approach, has virtually ensured that United States is written out of the Middle East. There is real disaster on the ground, and also a lot of bad press for the president.

Yet, glancing through the same election prism, the President sees as well the headlines about "third secretary of state in one term" and other such tripe that can be guaranteed to come his way if he were to give Shultz the Haig treatment. The result? "Let's wait for a change until *after* the election."

In the meantime, of course, the vacuum will be filled one way or another. And although the fortunes of Henry Kissinger have been tarred by Shultz's outrageous foreign policy sabotage, it is clear that Henry will be performing whatever blackmail and other thugery he can to insert himself into the kingmaker position once more.

For Henry, so he and many others think, has the Moscow card to play. And there are many in the administration, even Henry's detractors, who think that a Kissinger-led renewal of talks with Moscow will represent just the kind of newspaper copy hailing President Reagan as a "peacemaker" that the re-election cam-

paign needs.

Kissinger's appointment March 2 to the President's Foreign Intelligence Advisory Board may signal just this kind of broadened role for Moscow's favorite U.S. diplomat.

There is, of course, a clear alternative to capitulation to Kissinger, or sheer acceptance of a lack of real foreign policy control. That is to put back on course the necessary crash program for beam weapon defense.

The administration has been taking its own small steps in the right direction. A recent delegation led by presidential science adviser George Keyworth has toured the European capitals for further discussions on collaboration between Europeans and the United States on the space-based, directed energy-beam defenses which would render nuclear missiles obsolete.

Clearly the administration offer is being well received in certain European capitals. It has been reliably reported not only that seminars were held in West Germany and France but that the topic of beam defense will figure heavily in the upcoming "European integration" discussions to be sponsored by the Western European Union.

Unfortunately, the Reagan administration still prefers to prepare for the strategic thrust into defensive weapons systems in secret, thus robbing itself of the necessary political support in the West and the salutary fear in the East that it might engender with a political mobilization for a crash program. Thus one is forced to rely in part on the screams coming from Moscow to understand how the effort to center NATO on a joint beam strategy is progressing. Moscow screamed this week about beams, and it screamed loud.

With the Soviets gloating over their determining role in the Middle East, the imminent financial collapse, and the promotion of one more of their freezениks, Gary Hart, to political prominence, they have to be pulled up short. The announcement of a crash program—before or on the anniversary of March 23—would be the best political tombstone for Shultz and Kissinger.