

## Abrupt shift for the worse is State Department's doing

by Kathleen Klenetsky

On Oct. 6, National Security Adviser Robert McFarlane made two important disclosures in an interview on NBC-TV's "Meet the Press." McFarlane confidently predicted major breakthroughs within the next month in the deadlocked Mideast peace negotiations.

He also disclosed, for the first time, that the Reagan administration had adopted a new interpretation of the 1972 ABM Treaty. Under this reading—the only correct reading, as *EIR* has repeatedly insisted—the United States would be free to conduct research, testing, and development of advanced defensive technologies based on "other physical principles," as permitted by the Treaty's "Agreed Statement D." McFarlane's disclosure, based on a new Pentagon study of the ABM Treaty, signaled that the self-imposed fetters which had precluded the United States from pursuing some of the most promising avenues for strategic defense, would be removed.

Although it never became clear what McFarlane was pointing to on the Mideast front, his statements on the ABM Treaty suggested that a saner view had begun to prevail in the administration's policy councils, and that finally, perhaps, the United States would begin to operate in its own national interests, as opposed to the interests of its oligarchical elite and the elite's private, dirty deals with Moscow.

But less than two weeks later, the United States stood poised on the edge of catastrophe—thanks to President Reagan's susceptibility to the "pragmatic" blandishments of Secretary of State George Shultz and other Trilateral Commission agents in the administration.

### Strategic rout in the Mideast

What has actually transpired since McFarlane's television appearance?

Israel's manipulation of Reagan administration policy

around the *Achille Lauro* hijack, mediated through Shultz et al., has all but destroyed U.S. relations with Egypt and other moderate states and caused the collapse of one of the European governments most supportive of the Strategic Defense Initiative, Craxi's government in Italy.

Although Secretary of Defense Caspar Weinberger strenuously objected to the American intercept of the Egyptian plane carrying the *Achille Lauro* hijackers, arguing that such an affront to Egyptian sovereignty would wreck America's influence in the Mideast, his counsel was overruled by Shultz, Assistant Secretary of State Richard Murphy, and other State Department figures.

On the basis of disinformation supplied by the Israeli Mossad—whose behavior has been guided by Tel Aviv's ongoing negotiations with Moscow (see story, p. 41)—the Shultz gang succeeded in convincing Reagan the PLO was complicit in the hijacking. So strong an influence does this corrupt bunch wield over Reagan that they were able to get him to renege on the statement he made early on Oct. 10, to the effect that if the PLO had the organization to bring the hijackers to justice, that would be fine with him. After a personal intervention by Richard Murphy, Reagan later that day did a complete turnaround, announcing, "I shouldn't have said that."

By profiling Reagan's Rambo-like tendencies, his desire to show that the United States would no longer be a sitting duck for every half-baked terrorist that came along, these enemies of the United States secured his acquiescence in an operation which has done more to turn the Mediterranean into a Russian lake than any other single event of the past decade.

Thanks to this glorious anti-terrorist action of Oct. 10, Tunisia, Egypt, and Jordan—America's closest allies in the region—are threatened with destabilization by Soviet-backed

forces. The corrupt factions within Israel are closer to an accommodation with Moscow than ever before. And Secretary of Defense Weinberger, the sanest voice within the administration on strategic policy, has been undercut to the point where his enemies are now suggesting he accept his fate, and resign.

## In the Pacific

In the Pacific, too, the State Department's countercoup is making itself felt with a vengeance. As *EIR* has reported, the State Department has been spearheading a move to overthrow Philippines President Ferdinand Marcos, with the intention of handing the Pacific over to the Soviets. Days after the *Achille Lauro* fiasco, it was disclosed in mid-October that President Reagan had deployed Sen. Paul Laxalt (R-Nev.), his close friend and former campaign manager, to the Philippines, to deliver a personal letter to Marcos.

To those who remember the events leading up the overthrow of the Shah of Iran and its consequences, Reagan's initiative is frighteningly familiar.

According to a number of sources, the letter contained an ultimatum: If President Marcos does not "reform" the military and obey the conditionalities set by the International Monetary Fund, the letter reportedly reads, then the United States will be forced to withdraw its support for the Philippines and remove its crucial strategic bases from the islands.

Reportedly the "bluntest presidential message ever sent to a friend," the letter was based on an assessment from the Central Intelligence Agency and the Defense Intelligence Agency which claims that the Philippines is headed for "catastrophe" under the Marcos government. The contention is that the Marcos administration is incapable of fighting back against the New People's Army (NPA) and that within two to five years the country will be taken over by this Soviet-backed insurgency unless Marcos is removed. According to reports, the United States is also seeking alternative sites for the bases.

This is the straight State Department line—and it is total buncombe. Reliable reports from Manila indicate that the Philippines army has in fact made considerable progress in the past month in countering the NPA. The NPA still enjoys considerable protection and support from the oppositional forces that the U.S. State Department wishes to have replace President Marcos.

Secondly, the NPA will continue to exist and even grow to the extent that the Philippines economy collapses. That collapse is the direct result of policies imposed on the country by the International Monetary Fund—policies which Marcos is now fighting. This, and not the NPA, is the big reason for the State Department's displeasure with the Marcos government.

Marcos and his spokesmen told Laxalt that the United States appears not to know anything about what is going on in the Philippines. If Reagan persists in following George Shultz's orders to withdraw support from Marcos, the United

States will lose another key ally to Soviet influence.

With Shultz now in the ascendancy, the linchpin of American strategic policy has been thrown into jeopardy: the SDI. *EIR* was happy to report two issues ago that the administration had opened a strong, pre-summit offensive for the SDI. Principal flanks of this offensive included a campaign to publicize the fact that the Soviets' strategic defense program far outstrips that of the United States, and a move to broaden the reading of the ABM Treaty.

The latter move, an extremely significant step in removing obstacles to the progress of the American strategic defense program, was first publicly revealed by McFarlane on "Meet the Press," and was confirmed as official policy by a senior administration official a few days later. But as events of the subsequent two weeks have shown, what's official Reagan policy one day, becomes an orphan the next.

Five days after McFarlane's declaration, Shultz, who has bitterly fought against the SDI since it first became Reagan policy, had managed to convince the President to cut the rug out from under the pro-SDI faction. At what has been described as an "emotionally charged, knock-down, drag-out" meeting on Friday, Oct. 11, where Weinberger, McFarlane, and Shultz battled it out, Reagan decided to "compromise" after the Secretary of State threatened to resign if he didn't get his way.

Shultz unveiled that "compromise" at the NATO Parliamentarians' meeting in San Francisco Oct. 14, telling the legislators that Reagan has decided to revert to the "restrictive interpretation" of the Treaty. According to Shultz, the compromise which Reagan embraced means that while a "broader interpretation [of the ABM Treaty] is fully justified," this is "a moot point" because the SDI program has been, and will continue to be, "conducted in accordance with a restrictive interpretation of the treaty's obligations."

Shultz, who flew to Brussels the next day to deliver the same message to a NATO Foreign Ministers' meeting, also praised Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachov's recent "50% solution"—correctly decried by Secretary of Defense Caspar Weinberger and others as a fraud—as a "step forward" and the basis for "real progress" at Geneva.

At a press conference after the meeting, Shultz gloated that the allies had responded with "universal happiness" to his announcement. But according to sources, Shultz's State Department had actually asked key anti-SDI figures within allied governments to send official messages to the White House expressing displeasure with the McFarlane interpretation of the treaty.

That became public on Oct. 17, when Sen. Jesse Helms (R-N.C.) charged on the floor of the Senate that there is evidence that Rozanne Ridgway, assistant secretary of state for European Affairs, and her predecessor, Richard Burt, now U.S. ambassador to West Germany, had "instigated our allies to strike a blow at our defense," by having them demand that the U.S. stick to the restrictive interpretation of the ABM Treaty.