

EIR called the shots at the Iceland summit

by Nicholas F. Benton

In last week's story filed from Reykjavik, the evening before the final day of the Oct. 10-11 pre-summit there, I reported that, as a result of two public exchanges between myself and Soviet spokesmen at press briefings, "the world was publicly exposed to the Soviet intransigence on the main issue of those talks, the President's Strategic Defense Initiative." This, while most other members of the Washington, D.C. press corps, transplanted temporarily to the far North, were heralding the imminence of an arms-control agreement and "peace in our time."

It is now well known, that within 24 hours of the time I filed that story, the summit had foundered on exactly the issue I had identified. President Reagan plainly refused to give up the SDI. *EIR* was the only news service, among over 1,000 present, to correctly identify what Reagan and Gorbachov were fighting over during their 14 hours of secret exchanges at the Hofti House in Reykjavik.

This fact was evidenced also by the sometimes-heated exchanges I had with leading Soviet spokesmen, notably physicist Yevgenii Velikhov, as well as with U.S. representatives, at numerous press briefings in the days leading up to the summit. A besieged Georgii Arbatov, head of Moscow's U.S.A. and Canada Institute and the Kremlin's chief "America handler," aided the effort by announcing angrily to everyone that this reporter's publication was affiliated with Lyndon LaRouche.

I will not soon forget the shock that came over the press stationed at the White House press center, when Secretary of State George Shultz came in at the end of the eight-hour Sunday marathon, ashen-faced, to report that the talks had

broken down when President Reagan refused to give in to a Soviet demand for a written change in the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty, specifying that SDI-related research be restricted to the laboratory for 10 years.

On that Sunday of seemingly endless waiting at the White House press center, astonished reporters watched as the television monitor at the front of the room suddenly flashed on a story about Lyndon LaRouche's charge that the Oct. 6 raid against his associates in Leesburg signified that the Soviets were demanding his head on a platter at the Reykjavik summit.

Soon after, another TV monitor that had focused for hours on the entrance of the Hofti House, showed the door open and the two leaders finally emerge; then came the announcement that the President was leaving for Keflavic Airport and that Shultz would be at the briefing room within five minutes. The television lamps lit up and the room became a beehive of frenzied activity.

The collapse of negotiations

Shultz walked in, visibly exhausted and shaken. "Never have I been so proud of my President as I have been in these sessions," he began. He proceeded to outline what he called "the extremely important potential agreements" that, he said, "were reached to reduce strategic arms in half and to deal effectively with intermediate-range missiles."

The reporters, still believing that agreement was at hand, continued their flight forward. "They've done it!" one reporter whispered loudly, pounding feverishly into her portable word-processor, along with the scores of other reporters

who were already sending their stories back to their editors, as the words were spilling out of Shultz's mouth.

Shultz droned on about "potential agreements," but then revealed the Soviets' rejection of the President's offer to extend the ABM Treaty, while eliminating all offensive weapons, and the President's unwillingness to submit to their uncompromising demand that SDI research be confined to the laboratory.

The manic typing began to slow down.

Shultz brought the room to a dead silence when he said, "And so, in the end, with great reluctance, the President, having worked so hard, creatively and constructively for these potentially tremendous achievements, simply had to refuse to compromise the security of the U.S., of our allies and freedom by abandoning the shield that has held in front of freedom. So, in the end, we are deeply disappointed at this outcome."

As Shultz asked for questions, the room was stunned. Quicker-witted reporters started asking for clarification. One desperately tried to signal his editors to kill the story he had already sent, reporting an historic arms control agreement. But it was too late; the story had already gone out over his wire service throughout Europe.

Shultz tried to avoid calling on me, but as he stepped down from the podium to leave, I shouted out, "What about the Soviets' SDI program? We know they have one. What are we to make of this, in light of that?" Shultz glared—he could not avoid the question. The entire press corps knew, as he did, that it was coming from the only journal that had been on target on this issue at Reykjavik.

He walked slowly back to the podium, but said only, "I know I've hit these things in a very broad way necessarily. But we'll be prepared to go into more detail as the time goes on."

Shultz ducked the issue, but President Reagan did not. The President proceeded to Keflavic Airport, and at the U.S. air base, before departing, delivered a brief address to the troops stationed there, in an upbeat tone opposite to Shultz's down-in-the-mouth performance. Reagan told the troops and their families: "The Soviet Union insisted that we sign an agreement that would deny to me and to future Presidents for 10 years the right to develop, test, and deploy a defense against nuclear missiles for the people of the free world. This, we could not and will not do." The crowd drowned out his next words with a deafening cheer; I knew then that Reagan would go home a victor in the eyes of the U.S. population.

The Soviet 'SDI'

But this was contingent, I thought, on how he handled his speech to the nation Monday night, Oct. 13, which, according to White House spokesman Larry Speakes, Reagan wrote himself. Reagan mentioned for the first time the Soviet SDI: "The Soviets," he said, answering my question which Shultz avoided in Reykjavik, "have devoted far more

resources for a lot longer time than we, to their own SDI. Why are the Soviets so adamant that America remain forever vulnerable to Soviet rocket attack? As of today, all free nations are utterly defenseless against Soviet missiles—fired either by accident or design. Why does the Soviet Union insist that we remain so, forever?"

The next day, at the White House press briefing, I asked Larry Speakes if it were not the case that the Soviets' refusal to admit to their own SDI program, while seeking to stop ours, did not have "ominous implications" concerning Soviet designs to create a first-strike nuclear capability. He agreed it did.

The press, meanwhile, was struggling to regroup. They listened carefully to what Gorbachov said at his press conference in Reykjavik (the Soviets screened all journalists attending, and excluded me from their list). The new "line" emerged: "The summit was a failure. . . . Reagan had the greatest arms control package in history in his hands, and let it go because of his stubborn fixation on 'Star Wars.'" Some European media coined the term "Black Sunday" to characterize the final day of the summit.

But despite the media attempts to dictate reality, the American population had its own ideas. The first sign came on Oct. 14, when Reagan called Republican and Democratic congressional leaders to the White House to brief them on the summit. The Democrats came out of the meeting refusing to criticize the President's handling of the summit. Button-holing Rep. Dante Fascell (D-Fla.) after the meeting, ABC loudmouth Sam Donaldson prefaced a question by saying, "Given, Congressman, that the summit was a failure. . . ."

This reporter interrupted, asking Fascell, "Some media say the summit was a failure. Do you think that is a correct characterization?" When Fascell replied, "No, I do not think it was a failure," Donaldson gestured violently and cursed in front of his own TV cameras.

Interview: Yuri Dubinin

Separate arms control deals? 'Not a chance'

by Nicholas F. Benton

Following are excerpts from an exclusive interview with Soviet Ambassador to the U.S. Yuri Dubinin made on the plane returning from Reykjavik to the United States Monday, Oct. 13. It is the first Western interview with a leading Soviet official after the Iceland meeting.