

Eye on Washington by Nicholas F. Benton

Reagan's contradiction on superconductivity

White House spokesman Marlin Fitzwater conceded that there is a glaring contradiction in the administration's new policy on superconductivity technology, in his press briefing here July 29. On the one hand, the administration professes a desire to assist U.S. industry in exploiting the limitless commercial, military, and scientific potentials of superconductivity. On the other hand, it proposes to restrict public access to results of superconductivity research achieved in government labs, supposedly to prevent foreigners from getting access to it.

A huge, two-day conference, "Superconductivity: Challenge for the Future," was sponsored by agencies of the executive branch, drawing almost 2,000 researchers and executives of leading U.S. corporations to spur them on to exploit the incredible breakthroughs in superconductivity achieved during the past year. Reagan addressed the conference himself.

However, the administration's three-part legislative package aimed at expediting development of the technology includes tightening the Freedom of Information Act law to make access to government data on the technology more difficult.

When I asked Fitzwater about this contradiction, he conceded it was a profound problem. He said it was based on the need to keep U.S. industries competitive. He said, "How do

you provide incentives for U.S. industries, and at the same time not give away their competitive advantage? We do not have an answer."

U.S. media loves Gorbachov, 'glasnost'

Seventy percent of the stories generated by the major U.S. news media on the subject of the "new" Soviet policy of *glasnost*, or "openness," have "treated *glasnost* as genuine reform," according to S. Robert Lichter of the Center for Media and Public Affairs. He spoke at an American Enterprise Institute forum here July 29 on "Taking Glasnost Seriously."

Lichter, author of the new book, *The Media Elite*, added that a survey of major U.S. media also shows that 90% present Soviet General Secretary Gorbachov in a "favorable light" compared to his predecessors. As a result, he said, polls in the U.S. now show that the American people think Gorbachov is doing a better job as a leader than President Reagan.

He cited a survey of *Pravda*, during the same period the U.S. media has been writing favorably about *glasnost* and Gorbachov. It published an average of five-six articles on the United States per day, he said, and has never deviated from its policy of characterizing the U.S. as "an imperialist warmonger seeking global domination," run by its "military-industrial complex" (a term so common in the Soviet press that its acronym, MIC, is often used).

Speaking at the same AEI forum, AEI weasel Michael Novak said that while *glasnost* may be a Soviet deception operation in the international arena (this notion is so widely accepted in Washington that even Novak can't deny it), it can be "exploited" to "pry loose concessions in the area of human rights."

'War on drugs' caving in

"The production and availability of illicit drugs continues to grow despite international concern over their adverse effects," stated Joseph Kelley of the Government Accounting Office in testimony to the House Foreign Affairs Task Force on International Narcotics Affairs here July 29.

He said that while statistics indicate Americans' use of marijuana decreased by 4% between 1982 and 1985, their use of cocaine grew at a staggering rate. Cocaine consumed in the U.S. is imported, and that all the cocaine used in the U.S. comes from three Ibero-American countries: Bolivia, Peru, and Colombia. A preliminary review of U.S. anti-drug efforts in cooperation with the governments of those countries, he said, has shown a failing effort.

In Bolivia, for example, he cited lack of progress following U.S. cooperation in "Operational Blast Furnace" that destroyed cocaine labs buried deep in the Amazon forests in 1986. He blamed a "failure of the Bolivian government to capture or imprison known major traffickers," combined with "reported corruption at all levels within the country and public apathy towards the efforts to curb narcotics production."

He did not mention the urgent appeal made by Bolivian government officials who came to Washington following "Operation Blast Furnace" seeking essential support for follow-up efforts. He did not mention that they were sent home from Washington empty-handed.

In the case of Colombia, he was more willing to blame the U.S. for failure to maintain spare parts and repairs on aircraft loaned to the Colombian government for detection and spraying programs, as well as lack of U.S. follow-up monitoring efforts.

He did not mention Peru.