

## Editorial

### *First to go—Reagan or Gorbachov?*

The fast-paced developments reported on our international pages lead to one immediate question as the Ides of March 1988 approach: Which of the two protagonists of the December 1987 Washington summit that led to the INF treaty, will be the first to be dumped—Ronald Reagan or Mikhail Gorbachov?

First, take a look at Mikhail Gorbachov's situation. After the disdainful treatment which George Shultz was given in Moscow when he was brought in last fall by train, it became clear that a troika had taken over power in Russia. The only reason why the troika—made up of Ligachov, Chebrikov, and Ogarkov—has kept Gorbachov on, is as a "super traveling salesman" to be used as a negotiating tool with Reagan.

Meanwhile, as our international lead article confirms, in reporting the latest Communist Party plenum, the troika is proceeding apace with the militarization of the Soviet economy.

What's now going on inside the East bloc—mass demonstrations from Armenia to Estonia and an out-of-control situation in Poland—indicates that the dumping of Gorbachov is under way. In Armenia, 600,000 demonstrators took to the streets in defiance of a Moscow Central Committee meeting and after a speech by Gorbachov in which he had specifically called for calm and no such action. The Soviet KGB is allowing the situation to unfold.

But Ronald Reagan is surely no steadier than his Russian interlocutor. Look at what the United States is doing in Panama: The object of the insane U.S. operation is to steal Panama for the drug outfits and turn it into a free zone. We are looking at a situation motivated by straightforward greed. General Manuel Noriega was standing in the way of this operation, since he's the last anti-drug fighter left in the region. Therefore, they decided to get rid of him.

Consider the figure of Norman Bailey, the U.S. case officer on the Panama situation. Bailey had been assigned as a liaison to our founding editor Lyndon LaRouche by the National Security Council on what became the Strategic Defense Initiative, an initiative conceived by LaRouche, back in the first Reagan

administration. Then Bailey went into the private sector, where he, Bailey, is coordinating the insane U.S. effort to set up a Vesco-style criminal project in Panama just like the one he had previously coordinated in the Azores.

The operation is being run by a bunch of amateurs known as the U.S. Central Intelligence Agency. Their objective is to push Noriega out of the way so that they can set up their free-zone rip-off. The liberals like Senator Kerry rightly opposed U.S. involvement in Nicaragua, but they're now jumping up and down calling for an invasion of Panama.

What's going on is morally wrong; it's strategically stupid; it's insane for Panama, the region, and this country.

The family of ex-President Delvalle was pressured by the U.S. State Department—specifically by Assistant Secretary of State Elliott Abrams, who has made it explicit that he wants to see the militaries of Central and South America dismantled. If Noriega spills the files and tapes he has, then the Bush presidential campaign is finished. Noriega is no pushover. He's a tough cookie, and he's going to fight.

The "Project Democracy" crowd is aiming to get another great success in Panama like those the same secret, illegal government pulled off against U.S. allies in Iran and the Philippines. *EIR's* editors were the first, in 1979-80, to expose the co-conspirators within the U.S. government that brought Khomeini to power in Iran. Two years ago, in 1986, when Project Democracy and the CIA bumblers overthrew the Marcos regime in Manila, we warned that not democracy, but chaos, leading to takeover by the New People's Army communist guerrillas lay ahead. Our forecast is sadly coming true, on schedule.

At that time, the insane destabilization of Panama began to escalate.

When Gorbachov goes, the troika will continue to rule in the Soviet Union. As for the United States: We are in a presidential election year. Yet only one candidate has even recognized that there is a grave crisis before us, and that is Lyndon H. LaRouche, Jr.