

## Eye on Washington by Nicholas F. Benton

### 'Conservative' gala boosts neo-isolationism

They billed it as the gala First Annual Conservative Victory Dinner of the United Conservative Appeal. For \$1,000 a plate, about 200 couples at a posh hotel here were subjected to an evening of non-stop "hard line" here Sept. 29. Former U.N. Ambassador Jeane Kirkpatrick, Sens. Jesse Helms (R-N.C.), William Armstrong (R-Colo.), and Malcolm Wallop (R-Wyo.), and White House Communications Director Patrick Buchanan were the speakers; Rev. Jerry Falwell gave the invocation.

But, aside from Buchanan, whose speech targeted Sen. Richard Lugar (R-Ind.) for his turncoat role in opposing President Reagan on the South African sanctions issue, this conservative gathering pitched just the neo-isolationist, "bash the allies" line that Gorbachov loves to hear.

Kirkpatrick lashed out at the European allies and Mexico, in particular, who "repeatedly stab us in the back at the U.N."

Kirkpatrick's message was not missed for anyone who knows the "New Yalta" line that Georgetown's Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS) is pushing: Abandon Europe to the Soviets, in the name of waging war against communism and corruption in Central America. Kirkpatrick insisted, on cue, that the Nicaragua conflict is the most important strategic confrontation point in the world.

Then there was Malcolm Wallop, a direct descendant of British royalty. At the outset, he made some compelling points. He made a strong argument for why the Anti-Ballistic Missile (ABM) Treaty, negotiated by Gerard Smith and friends in 1972, was and is a disaster. It banned defensive systems against ICBMs, he said, at a time when 85% of the Soviet offensive nuclear capability was aboard ICBMs; but it did not ban defenses against air attacks, when the vast majority of U.S. nuclear strike capability was airborne.

Now, he noted, not only have the Soviets violated that treaty, and others, with impunity, but they have been able to complete a "competent" national ABM defensive system with a three-tiered kinetic-energy defense. The construction of the radar facility at Krasnoyarsk completed the system.

Wallop stressed that the issue of the Krasnoyarsk radar is not that it technically violates the ABM Treaty, but that it completes the command and control function for a ring of six radar stations, giving the Soviets a ballistic missile defense system with short-, intermediate-, and long-range interceptors.

What the senator failed to point out, was that the heart of the Soviet ABM effort lies in its laser and directed-energy research, which has been going on for 17 years, and is not yet fully ready to be deployed.

Ignoring this, and contending that the Soviets already have a conventional ABM defense in place, Wallop proceeded to condemn the contents of President Reagan's July 25 letter to Gorbachov (which proposed joint deployment of a laser-based SDI system) and to insist that the United States move immediately to a kinetic energy-based "point defense" of missile sites.

Wallop went so far as to accuse the President of sabotaging the Stra-

tegic Defense Initiative. He attributed the origin of the SDI to the 1980 Republican Party platform, which he claimed responsibility for. Then he said that Reagan's July 25 letter was nothing but an "offer to extend the ABM Treaty another seven and a half years" and "is killing the SDI." He attacked U.S. laser and directed-energy research—the forefront of the SDI effort—as "technological navel-gazing," and lashed out at what he called the "we can't do anything until we can do everything thesis of the Pentagon."

### Weinberger rejects 'point defense'

Defense Secretary Caspar Weinberger, speaking at a conference of the Ethics and Public Policy Center here Sept. 26, flatly rejected the view expressed by Wallop and company.

Early deployment of a "point defense" to protect missile sites will only give credibility to the Soviet argument that SDI is meant as an adjunct of a U.S. "first strike capability," Weinberger noted.

Reagan, on the other hand, by revealing the contents of his letter to Gorbachov before the United Nations General Assembly, offered a proposal for SDI deployment that could never be conceived as seeking a "first strike" advantage—thus demolishing the credibility of Soviet objections. (It is worth noting in this connection, that while Reagan meets with Gorbachov in Iceland Oct. 11-12, Weinberger will be in India talking about the SDI with Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi).

By contrast, "point defense" takes our allies out of the SDI equation entirely, thereby playing right into the Kirkpatrick/Zbigniew Brzezinski "Fortress America" isolationist scenario.