

Editorial

Reagan's mandate

Six months ago, the second Ronald Reagan presidency was inaugurated, following one of the most resounding electoral mandates in the history of the United States. So far, under the accepted Washington wisdom that it is better to wait than to act in time, Reagan has squandered that mandate. Although he reiterated—in a radio address recorded on the eve of his surgery on July 13—his firm commitment to the Strategic Defense Initiative, even that keystone of the President's policy risks being dislodged by the Eastern Liberal Establishment, which has remained, and strengthened its hand inside the administration.

Let us look back on this half-year. In his inaugural speech on Jan. 21, Reagan asserted, "There are no limits to growth and human progress, when men and women are free to follow their dreams," and pledged to end the era of "Mutually Assured Destruction," the military doctrine which has prevented the kind of technological revolution that could overturn the "limits to growth" worldwide.

We noted at the time that Reagan had 100 days in which to fulfill his mandate. We called upon the President to hold a summit meeting with Third World leaders to plan out, for rapid implementation, a program for massive debt renegotiation and for a new, just world economic order.

Whether Reagan's commitment to the Strategic Defense Initiative would succeed in defusing the dangerous strategic crisis depended on a sharp turn in the Reagan administration's policies—away from support for the genocidal International Monetary Fund, which is killing Africa today and threatens millions in the rest of the developing sector this year, and the advanced sector next. And this meant breaking with the Kissinger apparatus which controlled Reagan's 1984 reelection campaign.

The turning point occurred just before the 100 days were up, on April 15-17, when the International Monetary Fund interim committee meeting convened in Washington. This took place immediately after a worldwide mobilization organized by the Schiller In-

stitute had brought tens of thousands of citizens into the streets of Washington, Mexico City, Stockholm, Lima, Strasbourg, and other capitals to rally against the IMF and demand that Reagan break with its policies, on the weekend of April 13-14.

Not only did the Reagan administration not break with the IMF; but Treasury Secretary James Baker III announced on April 17 that the United States was officially relinquishing sovereign control over its economic policies in favor of "IMF surveillance."

On precisely the issue we defined as the most crucial, the Reagan administration knuckled under to the Eastern Establishment. And as we warned, the security of the West has been undermined since then in an escalating series of disasters.

On April 24, President Reagan appealed on national television to the American public to support the deficit-reduction proposal being debated on Capitol Hill—a proposal which reflected in every way the IMF's demands that U.S. defense be subordinated to budget-cutting.

In May Reagan went to Bonn for the "economic summit." His invocation of the greatness of German classical culture during that trip, did much to shore up the Western alliance. But the summit itself was a fiasco, ratifying the notion of increased IMF surveillance over every national economy, and failing to win a consensus of support for the SDI.

On June 10, the President announced he had decided to commit U.S. forces to compliance with the never-ratified SALT II treaty, which he himself had earlier documented to be massively violated by the Soviet Union. On July 9, wire services were reporting that the President was willing to accept the drastic cuts in defense proposed by the House of Representatives, to break the budget deadlock.

The pattern is unmistakable. Unless Mr. Reagan frees himself—or is forceably freed—from the grip of IMF control, the SDI, which the President rightly called "the most hopeful possibility of the nuclear age" is doomed. And time is running out, fast.