

Reagan shakes Soviets with proposal to share SDI

by Kathleen Klenetsky

President Reagan delivered a stunning propaganda defeat to the Kremlin, in his address to the United Nations General Assembly on Sept. 22. The President temporarily abandoned diplomatic niceties, to publicly discuss the new package of arms-control proposals he had first made in his confidential July 25 letter to General Secretary Mikhail Gorbachov.

As the President reported in his speech, the cornerstone of the American proposals is joint U.S.-Soviet deployment of a strategic defense system that would protect both countries and their allies from nuclear attack.

Moscow well knows, that this concept for establishing the basis for an enduring peace was first proposed by *EIR* founder and contributing editor Lyndon LaRouche in 1982. Reagan's adoption of the idea is being read by the Soviets to mean that LaRouche's influence within the administration is on the increase, not only in the realm of the Strategic Defense Initiative (SDI) and other military matters, but on other crucial issues as well, which explains the recent savage attack against LaRouche in the Soviet Central Committee's international magazine *New Times*, as well as the long period of Soviet official silence after receiving the Reagan proposal.

In his speech to the United Nations, the President motivated U.S.-Soviet cooperation on strategic defense as the most fruitful way to diminish the prospects of war. "We have gone far to meet Soviet concerns expressed about the potential offensive use of strategic defense systems," Reagan said. "I have offered firm and concrete assurances that our SDI could never be used to deploy weapons in space that can cause mass destruction on Earth. I have pointed out that the radical reduction we seek now in offensive arsenals would be

additional insurance that SDI cannot be used to support a first-strike strategy."

He added, "Our preference from the beginning has been to move forward cooperatively with the Soviets on strategic defenses, so that neither side will feel threatened and both can benefit from the strategic revolution SDI represents."

The President then spelled out his proposal:

"We have told the Soviets that if we can both agree on radical reductions in strategic offensive weapons, we are prepared, right now, to sign an agreement with them on research, development, testing, and deployment of strategic defenses based on the following:

"First, both sides would agree to confine themselves, through 1991, to research, development, and testing, which is permitted by the Anti-Ballistic Missile (ABM) Treaty, to determine whether advanced systems of strategic defense are technically feasible.

"Second, a new treaty, signed now, would provide that, if after 1991, either side should decide to deploy such a system, that side would be obliged to offer a plan for sharing the benefits of strategic defense and for eliminating offensive ballistic missiles. This plan would be negotiated over a two-year period.

"Third, if the two sides can't agree after two years of negotiation, either side would be free to deploy an advanced strategic defense system, after giving six months' notice to the other."

It was clarified at the White House the next day that the "two-year period" would begin Jan. 1, 1992.

The President's public discussion of the proposal, in front

of an audience consisting of the top diplomatic representatives of nearly every country on Earth, caught the sly peasants in Moscow completely off guard. Reagan not only made it palpably clear that he has not retreated one iota from his commitment to the SDI, but placed defensive technology at the center of U.S.-Soviet relations.

Calling Moscow's bluff

The Soviet leadership had already been thrown into a panic by Reagan's July 25 letter, since it put them in a position where their hypocrisy on the question of the Strategic Defense Initiative could easily be exposed. After all, on what possible basis could the Soviet leaders (who are known to all but the most naive or deliberately blind observers, to have been working for the past 17 years on developing their own strategic defense capability) refuse to cooperate with the United States to end the threat posed by nuclear missiles—unless it's because they simply don't want the West to have a defense under any circumstances.

By openly discussing his proposal, the President called the Soviets' bluff. According to reliable sources, Soviet Foreign Minister Eduard Shevardnadze was so taken aback that he was forced to rip up the speech he had been scheduled to deliver to the U.N. the next day, and sat up most of the night drafting a new one.

It showed. Ninety percent of the Soviet foreign minister's address consisted of filler. The part that wasn't, consisted of violent, lying attacks against the President's SDI proposal.

Shevardnadze railed that Reagan's address was "full of misconceptions and prejudices." He accused the President of "evil designs": trying "to pass for good intentions," while trying to pass "a sword for a shield."

Failing to mention his country's systematic effort over the better part of two decades to develop an SDI of its own, Shevardnadze accused Reagan of "camouflaging" his real intentions with "high-sounding pronouncements about defensive programs which supposedly do away with the threat of attack." He added that the Soviets "will continue to protect outer space from the attempt to turn it into a military domain of one or two powers."

Trying desperately to salvage the "arms-control process," the U.S. liberal media, has been making rather futile attempts to cast U.S.-Soviet relations as somehow more positive than events suggest. The Sept. 25 *New York Times* published a lead article by Michael Gordon, claiming that Gorbachov had signaled a shift in the Soviet position on the ABM Treaty, in his reply to the President's July 25 letter, which Shevardnadze hand-delivered to Reagan on Sept. 19. Gordon wrote that Gorbachov had "moved toward compromise" on the question of how to limit the SDI, proposing that adherence to the ABM Treaty be continued for "up to" 15 years. The previous Soviet position called for each side to abide by the treaty for 15 to 20 more years.

That could hardly be considered a compromise; in any event, statements made by Soviet Deputy Foreign Minister

Yuli Vorontsov at a Moscow press conference Sept. 23, canceled any suggestion that the Kremlin was open to negotiations on the President's offer. Vorontsov said that Reagan knew in advance, from Gorbachov's letter, that the proposals he put forward at the U.N. were unacceptable to the Russians. "The President was warned we would not accept that," he said. He repeated the Soviet vow to "do everything in our power" to counter the "star wars" program. Reagan's U.N. speech "forces us again to ask: 'Is the American leadership really ready for any agreement leading to complete disarmament?'"

The President, however, seemed undeterred by the harsh Soviet reaction. Speaking to a group of conservative activists at the White House Sept. 23, Reagan reiterated his offer to share SDI technology with the Soviets. "In pursuit of a safer world, we're determined to move toward a future of greater and greater reliance on strategic defense. The only question for the Soviets is, do we move toward strategic defense together, or alone?"

World War III?

Secretary of Defense Caspar Weinberger made the point even stronger in a speech to the Executives Club of Chicago on Sept. 25, in which he presented a spirited defense of the SDI. The Pentagon chief deftly shot down criticisms of the SDI, and excoriated Moscow's "brazen hypocrisy" for attacking American strategic defense efforts, while working on their own. Situating the SDI in the context of "the desire to explore the vast unknown of nature and to grasp possibilities when others have given up hope," which he identified as the "life blood of American democracy," Weinberger explained that the "heart" of Reagan's proposal for U.S.-Soviet collaboration on strategic defense "is aimed toward the day when both sides will be free of the ballistic missile threat. What we seek is a stable and agreed transition period, in which Moscow and Washington jointly move toward greater reliance on defensive weapons for their own security. . . . There is in this proposal the same kind of hope, exploration and belief in the future that characterizes the American spirit. It offers the Soviet Union and the world the potential of a stable shift in the entire strategic framework that has dominated the world since 1945. If it desires, the Kremlin can lay aside propaganda—its accusations that we are the only ones working on strategic defense—and grasp this opportunity for a safer world."

But peace and stability are not what Moscow wants. Assessing the Soviet response to the Reagan speech, high-level U.S. intelligence analysts now believe that the powers-that-be in Holy Mother Russia, having judged that Reagan will not be weaned away from total commitment to strategic defense, have decided to devote the next 18 months to deciding whether or not it is feasible to launch preemptive war on the United States. A final decision, these analysts believe, will depend particularly on developments in naval and anti-submarine-warfare technology.