

## Eye on Washington by Nicholas F. Benton

### Bernard Kalb: Shultz's snake in the grass

The resignation Oct. 8 of Bernard Kalb as chief State Department press spokesman represents an escalation of, and a revelation about, the intense faction fight within the Reagan administration.

Kalb was hand-picked for his job by Secretary George Shultz. It is no secret to anyone in Washington that Shultz has been in open conflict with Defense Secretary Caspar Weinberger and National Security Adviser John Poindexter.

Things took a turn for the worse for the Shultz "faction" in the administration on May 27 this year, the day when White House spokesman Larry Speakes announced that, as far as President Reagan was concerned, SALT II was dead and its constraints would no longer be a factor in strategic military deployments.

Following that watershed announcement, the President hardened his determination to see through the development and deployment of the Strategic Defense Initiative, and pulled off a diplomatic coup by proposing in his July 25 letter to Gorbachov a plan for joint deployment of the SDI, which he then unveiled before the eyes of the entire world in his U.N. speech in September.

The "last straw" for the Shultz faction was the determination by the President to meet personally with Soviet Foreign Minister Shevardnadze last month without Shultz present.

All of this has meant that the President has embraced the realistic assessment of the Soviet drive for global strategic domination that has been coming out of the Pentagon, in particular from Weinberger (an old friend from California), and Navy circles that include Poindexter.

The Kalb move—which spokesmen from the White House made clear publicly they did not appreciate coming only days before the summit—is an escalation by the Shultz crowd.

It can be expected that "Bernie" will bare his soul as a seasoned journalist with the *New York Times*, CBS, and NBC, about all the "disinformation" he has been forced to peddle while serving as press spokesman at the State Department.

Characteristically, he refused to attack his boss, Shultz, for any of these problems in the administration, but pointed the finger at Poindexter.

### The Woodward flap

Kalb's effort will be to give credibility to the report first published by Bob Woodward (of Watergate fame) in the *Washington Post* on Sept. 28. In that article, Woodward cited classified memos he had received which proved, he argued, that the administration deliberately lied to the U.S. media as part of a campaign to destabilize Libya's Muammar Qaddafi in August.

He referred to an internal memo from Poindexter suggesting the use of "disinformation" to deceive Qaddafi into believing the U.S. was preparing another military raid like the one conducted last spring.

Woodward asserted that this memo resulted in an article "planted" in the Aug. 25 *Wall Street Journal*, including a "leak" from a source high in the administration about concerns the administration had that Qaddafi was

reviving his plans to engage in international terrorism, and that the U.S. was preparing a preemptive military response. The article's headline said the U.S. was on a "collision course" with Libya.

Woodward claimed that the script called for that "planted" story to be followed by a briefing from White House spokesman Larry Speakes during the President's vacation in Santa Barbara in which Speakes would "advise" the media that the *Wall Street Journal* article, although it contained an "unauthorized leak," was accurate.

All of this, Woodward asserted, was a scheme to deceive the U.S. media, and thereby the U.S. public, as unwitting tools of a deception game against Qaddafi.

Since the Woodward story broke, the White House press corps has refused to let up on Speakes concerning Woodward's charges. TV news "personalities" like Sam Donaldson and Bill Plante charged first that Poindexter's credibility was in question, and then more recently that the White House and the President's credibility was at stake.

Speakes has explained repeatedly to the press corps that when he advised them about the facts in the August *Wall Street Journal* story, he was telling them the truth—namely, that Qaddafi was reviving his terrorist capabilities, that there was growing concern in the United States, and that the U.S. wanted to deliver a warning, a "shot across the bow," as he put it.

He said there is an active investigation into who was the source of the leak that fueled the original *Wall Street Journal* story. He says the President is "spitting mad" about the leak, and wants to find out who did it to, perhaps, prosecute. Could it have been a high-level State Department spokesman who has recently resigned?