

## Eye on Washington by Nicholas F. Benton

### After Reykjavik: shake-ups in store

President Reagan learned as much about his own advisers as he did about Gorbachov during his marathon sessions in the Hofti House at Reykjavik Oct. 11-12.

The White House entourage had barely touched down at Andrews Air Force Base from the trip when it was announced that, from now on, National Security Adviser Adm. John Poindexter would become a major spokesman for administration policy.

Poindexter has been almost invisible since he took over for Robert McFarlane earlier this year. But he began briefing the press immediately after the summit, including television interviews with networks from NATO countries. Asked whether the new high profile for Poindexter were here to stay, White House spokesman Larry Speakes said "Yes."

Poindexter, who was the target of a State Department-*Washington Post* operation to oust him over a "credibility gap" charge in September, has apparently prevailed, while his factional enemies within the administration have suffered. In particular, Secretary of State George Shultz is on the ropes.

Rumors were circulating among the media hordes gathered at Reykjavik that Shultz was in trouble even before the summit—that Shultz's hand-picked choice for press spokesman, Bernard Kalb, had been given his walking papers because he was discovered as the source of the leak of a Poindexter memorandum in August

that was used by the *Washington Post's* Bob Woodward against Poindexter.

Speakes made it clear that the President was hopping mad about that leak. Days later, Kalb "resigned."

Shultz is also in hot water over his performance in Reykjavik.

According to columnists Evans and Novak, Reagan's advisers caucused with him near the end of the four-hour unscheduled fourth session Sunday, Oct. 12, and presented Reagan with a draft of the final U.S. proposal, offering to extend the ABM treaty to 10 years, with a phased, simultaneous elimination of all nuclear weapons over the decade.

However, Reagan noticed that in the draft, the definition of the ABM treaty allowed for only "research and development" of the Strategic Defense Initiative. It took Reagan's own intervention to insure that "testing" was added to the final draft presented to Gorbachov.

If this is true, Reagan had to be wondering what his so-called advisers were up to, since the issue of testing was the fundamental component of the SDI the President was refusing to concede in his confrontation with Gorbachov.

In reality, there is little doubt that Reagan surprised everyone, Shultz and Regan as well as the Soviets, with his sheer endurance and resolve to buck the Soviets' well-planned effort to offer the "carrot" of big arms reductions the first day, and then wear the 75-year-old President down, subjecting him to physical and mental exhaustion by almost eight hours of negotiations the second day.

Not only was Reagan more than a match for this operation; when it became clear to him that the sole purpose of Gorbachov's whole negotiating ploy was to get the United States to give up the SDI, the President judoed the sit-

uation to his own advantage by making the "ultimate offer" of the 10-year extension of the ABM Treaty and the total elimination of all nuclear weapons, knowing in advance that Gorbachov would refuse it, but giving Reagan the ability to tell the world, "See how far I was willing to go to end the arms race. See how the Soviets were unwilling to go along, only because they want us to stop a defense program that they themselves have."

The report that it was Gorbachov, rather than Reagan, who reached for his briefcase first, in exhausted frustration that his effort had failed, is undoubtedly true.

Reagan went directly to the Keflavik airport, where he spoke to the U.S. troops stationed at the base there. He gave a short, upbeat account of what happened, and how, in the name of freedom, he refused to give in to the Soviet pressure to abandon the SDI. When Reagan made a fist and proclaimed, "I could not and I would not give in!" and the crowd went wild, it became clear that, despite whatever the media would say, this was going to be seen by Americans as a major victory for the President and the SDI.

Shultz, on the other hand, went from the Hofti House to the White House media center to brief the press, and gave a morose account of the "disappointing" failure to reach an accord after the Soviets had hung the carrot out so far. Shultz's zombie-like performance disturbed the President. So did Chief of Staff Don Regan's claim two days later on NBC that Reykjavik proved how effective the SDI is as a "bargaining chip." Later the same day, Speakes reprimanded Regan publicly; the next day, Regan recanted.

It was a wiser President—wiser about the Soviets, but also about his own staff—who returned triumphantly from Iceland.