

## 'The kind of thing no fish would bite on'

by Criton Zoakos

Early in the morning of Oct. 24, in Brussels, Belgium, Secretary of State George Shultz, while reporting to the NATO allies the proposals which Mikhail Gorbachov had put forward to topple this year's projected superpower summit, described them as "the kind of thing no fish would bite on." Shultz's failure to "bite" on Gorbachov's new proposals has directly led to a new dramatic turn in U.S.-Soviet relations: All of a sudden, after the euphoric days of the Sept. 17 "agreement-in-principle" on elimination of intermediate nuclear forces (INF) from Europe, the two superpowers are at a new turning point, where any chances for an INF agreement are fast receding into the uncertain, distant future, chances for a summit between President Reagan and General Secretary Gorbachov have been virtually eliminated, and where, once again, the commitment of the United States to pursue its Strategic Defense Initiative (SDI) program is the central issue of contention between the two superpowers.

Soviet Foreign Minister Eduard Shevardnadze, in the aftermath of the abortive Shultz-Gorbachov meeting, told the public, "The Soviet Union considers a continuation of the SDI a violation of the [1972] Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty," and that Gorbachov "restated his readiness to meet President Reagan to sign an agreement on INF, but mainly to determine the key provisions on strategic defense and the preservation of the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty."

What were the "things no fish would bite on," that Gorbachov offered to Shultz during their four-and-a-half-hour meeting? According to an official TASS release, Gorbachov made three proposals: First, that the United States should "agree to legally record an obligation not to use the right to

withdraw from the ABM Treaty for 10 years, with strict compliance with the treaty"; second, that "from Nov. 1, a moratorium be announced on all work in connection with [medium-range and short-range missiles] production, testing, and deployment"; and, third, that "all work" be suspended at the Soviet radar in Krasnoyarsk and the "U.S. radar in Scotland."

The TASS release also made it clear that Gorbachov's vision of a summit with Reagan this year was simply that of a preparatory meeting, which was to have led to a follow-up visit of the American President to Moscow, in early 1988, where Reagan was to have signed away the SDI: "Mikhail Gorbachov," TASS said, "suggested, without losing time, that the work to coordinate positions in the field of strategic offensive arms and space at the talks in Geneva and at other levels be intensified so that, at a meeting, which is being planned for this year, with the President of the United States, it would be possible, along with the signing of a treaty on medium- and short-range missiles, to record an accord on the key provisions of future agreements on strategic offensive arms and space, which, in their turn, could be signed during Ronald Reagan's reply visit to the Soviet Union."

This was not to be. George Shultz, under the watchful eye of National Security Adviser Frank Carlucci, who accompanied him to all his meetings in Moscow, explained to the international press, after the debacle: "I don't need to say again, but I think it is important to emphasize, that we in the United States, and the President, feel very strongly that we must be able to do everything we can to see if we can learn how to defend ourselves against ballistic missiles. This is in



Stuart Lewis

*Soviet Foreign Minister Eduard Shevardnadze (with white hair), during meetings in Washington, D.C. in September, when a "breakthrough" toward an arms-control treaty was announced. Now, the smiles are gone, and the summit is on the rocks.*

the interests of our own security, the security of our friends and our allies. . . . We believe that the Soviet position linking strategic arms reductions to the changes in the ABM Treaty is not warranted. . . . As far as the space defense area is concerned, the Soviet Union has put forward various proposals, we put forward various proposals. They don't seem quite compatible at this point. Perhaps it is that our objectives are not compatible. So, if your objectives are not compatible, you can dance around the details of it for quite a while, but not get anywhere."

### **SDI: No bargaining chip**

President Reagan, right after he was briefed by telephone by Frank Carlucci about the outcome of the meeting with Gorbachov, caused a very brief press release to be issued by the White House, during the evening of Oct. 23. It was purported to be an excerpt from a wide-ranging interview that Reagan was giving to representatives of the foreign press. The short White House release contained the following brief exchange:

**Question:** "Mr. President, the sticking point seems to be the SDI, and are you prepared to make an adjustment in your position in order to achieve an agreement on the strategic. . . ?"

**President Reagan:** "No. I have said from the beginning that this world, which has no defense against nuclear weapons—the only so-called defense is the MAD policy, and it truly is 'mad'—Mutual Assured Destruction. And I have spoken to several parliaments throughout the world and legislatures, and each one of them have said that I don't believe a nuclear war can be won and it must not be fought. And

recently, Foreign Minister Shevardnadze here in this room, repeated those words to me as being his own belief, that it can't be won and shouldn't be fought. So I cannot make that a bargaining chip. We have the prospect of a defensive system that could practically make nuclear missiles obsolete. And I have said over and over again, that if and when we have such a system, we wouldn't use that for our advantage offensively against any other nation."

Congressional reactions to Gorbachov's sudden hardening were swift. Sen. Dan Quail, speaking for the Republicans, demanded that "the President should not knuckle under to this last-minute demand." More surprisingly, Democratic Sen. Sam Nunn of the Armed Services Committee cautioned the President "not to get caught in the trap where we want the summit as a goal in itself."

The following day, Oct. 24, during his weekly radio broadcast, the President said, "We're in no hurry, and we certainly will not be pushed into sacrificing essential interests just to have a meeting."

As of this point, there is no prospect for a 1987 summit, there is a very rapidly diminishing prospect for signing any INF treaty, and the two superpowers appear to be heading toward a period of bitter "competition" in at least two areas of strategic concerns, the SDI and the Persian Gulf.

### **Why the shift?**

The question: What caused this sudden and dramatic shift after the warm, Munich-like embraces of Sept. 16-18, the "agreement-in-principle" on the issue of the Euromissiles?

Even back then, at the time of the Shultz-Shevardnadze euphoria, one could discern "clouds in the silver lining," so

## LaRouche's defeat all who resist Soviet

*Nicholas Benton of EIR's Washington bureau interviewed Brig. Gen. (Ret.) Paul Albert Scherer, the former chief of military intelligence for the West German Bundeswehr, on Oct. 22 in Washington, D.C.*

**EIR:** General Scherer, recently you were in Paris, where you spoke at the meeting held there by the international Commission to Investigate Human Rights Violations, and now you have come to the United States, where you participated in a meeting of the same Commission in Boston, concerning the upcoming trial of U.S. political figure Lyndon LaRouche. What is your particular interest in the trial of Mr. LaRouche?

**Scherer:** I was interested in coming to observe this trial, because after having appeared for many years before German courts and parliamentary committees in my capacity as an expert on questions of espionage, sabotage, infiltration, penetration, etc., this particular case seems to me to have very marked features going in that direction.

Judging from my observations over the past few years, LaRouche has, in my view, become a first-class target of Soviet psychological warfare, because he is one of the few politicians in the West—and certainly one of the very few in the United States—to show his true colors, without any regard for his own personal safety and security, to the effect that Soviet infiltration of the Western world, and the attempts and successes of Soviet disinformation, will lead to a complete softening and decadence within Western civilization.

**EIR:** Can you tell me what in your opinion motivates this trial against Mr. LaRouche?

**Scherer:** Since I am a guest in your country, I can only express myself carefully. As is the usual practice in psychological warfare and disinformation, certain intelligence and information must have been placed into the hands of federal agencies, causing them to view LaRouche within a criminal context, so that criminal proceedings had to be initiated against him.

**EIR:** What, in your view, is the significance of the role of

to speak. First of all, it was the period during which Mikhail Gorbachov had disappeared from public view. As a matter of fact, Gorbachov never once, even after he resurfaced after his mysterious absence, had anything positive to say about the Shultz-Shevardnadze "agreement-in-principle." In fact, after his disappearance, he ostentatiously ignored the "diplomatic progress" in the area of arms control, and went straight to the naval base of Murmansk to exploit "photo opportunities" on board nuclear submarines and to make tough public speeches about the need to strengthen Soviet defense commitments and the need for civilian austerity in the years to come.

Another significant early "cloud in the silver lining" was the fact that the day preceding the September Shultz-Shevardnadze "agreement-in-principle," the SDI Organization submitted its *Report to Congress*, mandated by law, recommending a shift from the "restrictive to the broad" interpretation of the ABM Treaty during "fiscal year 1988," which places the decision before April of 1988. The day following the Shultz-Shevardnadze "agreement-in-principle," the secretary of defense awarded no fewer than six SDI contracts, all involving projects based on the "broad interpretation" of the ABM Treaty, and most of them meeting March 1988 deadlines.

The Russian High Command, during Gorbachov's mysterious absence, had every reason to believe that the United States was preparing for a restructuring of its SDI program to fit the "broad interpretation," during the spring of 1988.

Such a U.S. shift during 1988 would imply a preliminary first phase of SDI and Tactical Defense Initiative (TDI) deployments in Europe beginning in 1991, approximately the time of anticipated Euromissile removal, in the event an INF Treaty were to be signed and ratified.

One theory, therefore, suggests that potential SDI developments in the U.S.A. were leaving the Soviet command no other choice than to embark on a hard-line course, of the kind displayed by Gorbachov vis-à-vis Shultz.

A second theory suggests that the Soviet command, in the aftermath of the stock market collapse, evaluated President Reagan's political position as so extremely vulnerable, that he could be forced into further concessions. The President, however, does not seem to be inclined to make concessions on the SDI.

For practical purposes, it makes no difference which of these theories is closer to the truth. The fact of the matter is that there is a dramatic industrial, economic, and financial crisis in the United States, and simultaneously, a rapidly escalating East-West confrontation now. As Admiral Crowe, the chairman of the Joint Chiefs lectured a Wall Street audience on Oct. 19, the national security of the United States cannot afford another 1929-33.

It may be that Moscow is calculating that President Reagan lacks the economic policies required to avert a 1929-33 kind of economic calamity.