

## Eye on Democrats by Anita Gallagher

### Democrats change tune, while labor fiddles

The shockwave from the Korean airliner incident has produced a sharp about-face in the "six-pack" of Democratic presidential contenders. Prior to Sept. 1, they all were eager to peddle the stock Harriman-Manatt refrain lauding the "peaceful" intentions of Yuri Andropov and the intransigence of President Reagan.

After the downing of the Korean jet, the "six-pack" sounded a quite different tune—several tunes, in fact—but could not escape the scathing criticism of their fellow Democrat, Rep. Samuel Stratton.

In a statement issued Sept. 1, Walter Mondale said: "This barbarous and despicable act cannot be excused. . . . I join with many others in demanding a full explanation from the Soviet government for this murderous act. The U.S. government should take this matter immediately to the United Nations Security Council."

A Mondale aide added that the incident would force a "thorough review of the Vice President's thinking on the state of U.S. Soviet relations. We are in a state of shock here."

John Glenn was more cautious in his initial comments: "I deeply regret the tragic loss of life and deplore this unjustifiable act. However, any response by the U.S. government should await a further determination of the facts of the incident."

Rubin Askew said almost the same

thing: "The incident is tragic and apparently inexcusable. All the facts are obviously not yet known, and a full explanation and a full inquiry are needed."

In a more forceful vein, Ernest Hollings declared: "You are dealing with a hard-core adversary in Soviet Russia. . . . I would not want to go ahead with sanctions or a grain embargo. They do no good. What you really have to do is convene with the allies and get together in the National Security Council to register in the most meaningful way you can disapproval."

But, ironically, it was the leading nuclear freeze advocates Alan Cranston and Gary Hart who gave the sternest warnings. Said Cranston: "Frankly, I don't think there can be an acceptable explanation. . . . We are all in dire danger. . . . such incidents, whether the results of miscalculation, tactical error or an act of madness, bring us to the brink of nuclear war."

"The Soviet attack on an unarmed civilian passenger plane . . . was cowardly, unprovoked and barbaric," stated Hart. "The administration should explore a range of responses, including the cancellation of Soviet landing rights in the United States and the expulsion of Soviet military personnel from their embassies and consulates."

But Hart is hardly abandoning the freeze movement. Arms control talks with the Soviets, said an aide, "must not be halted or circumscribed. We now have a real opportunity to press the Soviets on arms control, while their political standing in the world appears damaged."

In this vein, Hart issued a subsequent statement saying that "suggestions that we should suspend arms control talks with the Soviets as retribution are misplaced. . . . It is because of behavior such as this week that we should pursue the toughest arms limitation agreements possible for our own national security."

### 'Reagan looks like a fool,' says AFL-CIO

While AFL-CIO chief Lane Kirkland appeared on a Sunday television news show Sept. 4 to demand sharp retaliation, ranging from another (ineffective) grain embargo to bans on technology transfer, more liberal union leaders linked to the Socialist International were insisting that now, more than ever, arms control is needed.

A spokesman for Kirkland's AFL-CIO joined the rightwing lunatics who insist that President Reagan has suffered a defeat: "With this jetliner incident, Reagan looks like a fool because of his bad timing. He has just relaxed all sorts of restrictions against the Soviets, in areas like providing grain and cultural exchanges, instead of increasing sanctions. He's done this while his far-right people are all parading around outside screaming against the Soviets. Yes, the plane incident will set back arms control efforts, but Reagan does not look good."

The initial reaction of a spokesman for the Communications Workers of America: "We don't know all the facts, whether the Korean pilots did communicate with the Soviet fighters, or even if the plane was shot down. Unfortunately, the Soviets haven't denied it."

"What if it had been a nuclear-equipped U.S. military plane? We could have had war, and Reagan thinks he can achieve peace through war. So we need more negotiations, not less. It means we have to step up the peace/freeze movement more than ever."

But the self-righteous self-contradiction award of the week was earned by a spokesman for the American Federation of Teachers, who observed that "What you have to realize is that the U.S. kills a lot of innocent people all the time, as in Central America and the Vietnam war. This incident may damage the peace movement, but may strengthen it too."