

Report from Paris by Katherine Kanter and Sophie Tanapura

'Weapons to overcome the crisis'

The business journal La Vie Française reports on the vast economic benefits of beam weapons development.

The leading French business weekly *La Vie Française's* cover story for April 11 was President Reagan's newly announced defensive military-strategic doctrine. The Paris weekly ranks among France's most influential media, with a circulation of 100,000 and a readership of 600,000.

The cover shows a ground-launched beam reflected by an orbiting mirror, hitting a missile in flight, with the title "Weapons to Overcome the Crisis."

We present here brief excerpts from the article:

"Beam weapons, also known as directed-energy weapons, represent a strategic revolution. They also contain the promise of an industrial revolution and economic regeneration. . . . Is this science-fiction? In fact . . . lasers used in [experimental] controlled thermonuclear fusion already have the power required to equip the 'batteries' of beam weapons. For a number of years the Soviet Union, which is several lengths ahead in the field, has been testing various elements of the beam family. . . .

"Reagan did not issue a set of proposals. He issued orders. As the commander in chief of the U.S. military, he has begun to restructure the Pentagon, where a high-level task force is already at work to implement the program . . . which commits the full might of the United States. . . .

"In fact, U.S. political figure LaRouche indicated in great detail one year ago the program which President

Reagan has now adopted, in his book *Only Beam Weapons Could Bring to an End the Kissingerian Age of Mutual Thermonuclear Terror*. 'The United States is going to start "tomorrow" to assemble and boost into space the first defensive beam weapons. Even if they are clumsy, primitive and bulky, they work and can start fulfilling their function. In five years the cumulative effect will have given us a complete space-based strategic system. Then we will go for the next generation of technologies. But we will have then eliminated the danger of thermonuclear annihilation of the human race,' emphasized Mr. LaRouche.

"The President has launched a genuine overall mobilization of industry, science, and technology, 'the creativity of our scientific community.' The 'NASA effect' that energized the U.S. economy (and as a result the whole world economy) through especially investment and productivity in advanced technologies, is going to be recreated.

"In the past, for \$1 of federal investment in NASA, \$10 of economic activity was generated. This nurtured an industrial texture rich in high-technology-oriented small- and middle-sized companies. If we assume a similar multiplier effect for beam weapons, we are dealing with \$2,000 billion worth of very high value industrial activity that would be generated in the coming decade! This would certainly help us out of the depression

without resort to unproductive Keynesian formulas or monetarist purges.

"The industrial impact of beam weapon technologies is properly a revolutionary one. The three priority domains are 1) thermonuclear fusion and plasma physics, 2) lasers and particle beams, and 3) the space program. President Reagan's position recalls that of Franklin D. Roosevelt: while the latter had tried every economic recipe in the book, and failed with his New Deal to make a durable dent in the Depression, the threat of war had forced him to adopt a program of economic mobilization with the state using its fiscal and credit powers to reorient and recreate necessary industrial machinery. The Manhattan Project that created the atomic bomb came from that mobilization. And as demonstrated by John F. Kennedy with his 1962 Man on the Moon speech, it is not war as such nor the war economy in itself that is at the bottom of this industrial regeneration: it is the mobilization of credit toward high productivity investment in the framework of large projects and large productive enterprises.

"France has the requisite capacities, industrially, scientifically, and technically, to build beam weapons. Our arms industry and the promising [nuclear] fusion sector can participate and benefit greatly. Experts propose as a first goal to develop point defense to protect first the Plateau d'Albion [the main site of French ICBM silos] and the rest of the French strategic force. Directed energy weapons could at the same time be developed in their tactical applications, for battlefield use.

"France could then in a second phase develop an area defense that would protect not only the strategic facilities but also our cities and those of our European allies."