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## CONFERENCE REPORT

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# Beam weapons' strategic and economic potential suddenly placed on French agenda

by Laurent Rosenfeld

On the anniversary of Gen. Charles de Gaulle's famous June 18, 1940 radio appeal that launched the French Resistance, leaders of that struggle and foremost Gaullist military figures joined with the European associates of U.S. Democrat Lyndon H. LaRouche, Jr. at a conference aimed at rallying France behind U.S. President Reagan's call to develop anti-missile beam weapons.

"The reason why we are here today is not to hold an academic debate, but to plan actions to eliminate thermonuclear terror and to relaunch our economies by implementing a beam weapons program," said Jacques Cheminade, secretary-general of the LaRouche-affiliated Parti Ouvrier Européen (POE), in his keynote address to the 150 people at the June 17-18 Paris conference.

A committee formed at the conference has already attracted a long list of prestigious endorsers for the beam weapons initiative. Naming itself *La France et Son Armée* after the 1930s book in which de Gaulle called for revolutionizing the French army, the committee's aim is to mobilize France and the West to build the advanced laser and particle-beam weapons needed for defense in the thermonuclear age. Stressing the strategic missile crisis emerging over the summer and fall, and the related danger of a looming financial collapse, the new committee is calling for:

- a full research and development program for producing directed-energy weapons, as the only way to defend the strategic interests and the independence of France and the West;
- the introduction of new, more productive technologies on the civilian economy as a spinoff of the laser technologies developed for the defense program;
- the systematic creation of public credit directed to productive investments; and
- support for the Reagan administration's corresponding strategic initiatives for the United States, and cooperation with other European countries willing to work in the same direction.

The call has so far been endorsed by 50 people, among them: Marie-Madeleine Fourcade, former chief of Alliance, a Resistance organization; retired Gen. Revault d'Allonnes,

specialist on defense questions for the Gaullist Party; retired General Thiry, former commander for special weapons and chief of the French Nuclear Experimentation Center at Reggan and Mururoa under de Gaulle; Henri Ziegler, former president of SNIAS (the National Industrial Aerospace Company); Professor Freche, a pioneer in the use of lasers in surgery; Jacques Cheminade, leader of the POE; and Philip Golub, European adviser to the U.S. National Democratic Policy Committee.

The feasibility of laser defense systems to protect France's independent nuclear force, the *Force de Frappe*, is one of the options being discussed by the French scientific and military communities. First-generation laser systems, mounted in the Alps and the Pyrenees, are being considered to defend the missile installations of the Plateau d'Albion, the submarine base of L'Ile-Longue, and the city of Paris, according to the press.

Philip Golub, representing the U.S. National Democratic Policy Committee, opened the discussion by reviewing the current international situation. "The world is facing two very grave crises," he explained, "a strategic or military crisis resulting from the stationing of the missiles in Europe, and the brutal reaction of the Soviets to President Reagan's March 23 policy speech, and an economic and monetary crisis perhaps even more acute.

"If Andropov reacted so violently to Reagan's initiative, it was because the Soviets, who were patiently waiting for the West to self-destruct, suddenly feared they could not match a technology race with the West. They would have to radically alter their socio-economic structure and abandon their dream of imperial domination."

### Two choices for France

The conference panelists then addressed the reasons why beam weapons must be developed now.

Gen. Revault d'Allonnes, the author of an RPR Gaullist Party defense policy statement calling for beam weapons development, told the audience: "When Russia and America have weapons capable of destroying rockets, the repercussions will be that our strategic arsenal will be useless. That

does not mean we should stop its upkeep, but it means we have to do much much more. . . . We have two solutions. Either we say that the Americans are nice and have been our friends from the beginning, and we completely rely on them. Or we follow the path indicated by de Gaulle—not by clinging in a doctrinaire manner to the *Force de Frappe*, but by taking our inspiration from the spirit of de Gaulle's actions—and setting France at the first rank, in cooperation with other European countries and with the U.S.A. I'll let you guess which alternative I favor.”

The general also pointed out that beam weapons would allow West Germany to attain an “adult status.” The Federal Republic is forbidden to build nuclear weapons, he said, but nothing prevents them from developing beam weapons.

Fusion Energy Foundation research director Uwe Parpart described the present status of research and development in beam weapons. He painted a bleak picture of Europe without them, showing that the highly precise Soviet SS-20 missiles have already effectively disarmed Western Europe. Attacking the doctrine of Mutually Assured Destruction (MAD), Parpart said that under MAD we can wonder whether an American president would “risk New York for Hamburg”; but the development of beam weapons will create a new strategic geometry that will allow the restoration of a symmetry of interests among the allied Western powers.

In the roundtable discussion that followed, Colonels Geneste and Debas criticized NATO General Rogers' “conventional buildup” policy, as well as the nuclear freeze movement. “General Rogers would have us fight with bayonets against tank divisions,” said Colonel Geneste. When the colonel supported U.S. Air Force Gen. Daniel Graham's “High Frontier” project, Uwe Parpart interjected that he had nothing per se against this project, but that the FEF was proposing a less vulnerable, less expensive, and more efficient project than Graham's idea of “throwing marshmallows against enemy missiles.” Given this option, why then, Parpart asked, does General Graham cling to this pet project?

## The Spirit of June 18

The next morning, Marie-Madeleine Fourcade opened the session by asking the audience to stand up as she read General de Gaulle's 18th of June Appeal. Calling for the perpetuation of the spirit of the Resistance, she said that the peace and nuclear freeze movements of today are the same as the defeatists in the Vichy regime whom de Gaulle denounced.

Former nuclear program director General Thiry outlined the history of the French nuclear effort, showing de Gaulle's deliberate attempt to develop both military and civilian applications. Since the time of the original inventor of beam weapons, Archimedes, scientific discoveries have always had both military and civilian applications, the general said. Only new scientific discoveries can obliterate the bad consequences of the military offshoots of the previous scientific discoveries.

Colonel Debas attacked the doctrinaire view that so often afflicted the French general staff—those who wanted in 1914 to fight again the 1870 Franco-Prussian War and those who in 1939 had a very fine strategy to win World War I.

Christine Juarez of the POE spoke on de Gaulle's concept of grandeur, retracing not only his statesmanship during the Cuban missile crisis but also his struggle for a policy of industrial development for the Third World, establishing ties with key nations in the developing sector. “Our problem today,” she said, “is that few political leaders are willing to assume that grandeur and that responsibility.”

## An industrial revolution

The afternoon panel took up the economic and technological effects of a beam weapons program. Dr. Jonathan Tennenbaum and Heinz Horeis of the West German Fusion Energy Foundation described the industrial revolution that could be expected from laser and beam technologies. They pointed out that the introduction of these technologies into the civilian economy would turn the current world depression into the greatest economic boom in history. Tennenbaum elaborated on the revolution needed in teaching methods to train a qualified labor force. We must reject all forms of mind-destroying Cartesian algebra, he said, and return to an examination of the geometry underlying the composition of our universe.

Horeis spoke on the multiple applications of thermonuclear fusion power, including the fusion torch and space propulsion. Metallurgical engineer Sayegh described the present use of laser and particle beam technologies for welding or brazing, for cutting metals, and for tempering and surface-hardening metal components. Sayegh stressed the tremendous increases in productivity that can be obtained from the large-scale utilization of such technologies.

Two physicians, Professors Freche and Melcer, concluded this session by discussing the many uses of lasers in medicine. Besides ophthalmology, where lasers have already been long in use, lasers have been applied to larynx surgery, stomatology, and tooth surgery by both physicians, who are world pioneers in the application and invention of laser technologies in the medical field. Professor Freche, who works at the Hospital Foch in Suresne, showed a movie on the use of a 10-kilowatt carbon gas laser in larynx surgery, while Professor Melcer explained the use of the same type of laser in dental surgery.

The conference concluded with a call by Cheminade for a New World Economic Order, re-directing credit into productive investment. This is why “Mr. LaRouche and myself support the cause of Third World countries,” said Cheminade. “Strangled by the IMF and Bank for International Settlements, these countries are uniting to declare a joint debt moratorium on their foreign debts. Only a such an action will bring our bankers and politicians back to a sense of reality. . . . France, now in financial ruin, must say no to the Swiss banks and play a leading role as a bridge between the West and the developing nations.”

# The French press examines ABM weaponry goals

Many articles have appeared recently in the French press on the subject of particle beam weapons, their feasibility, and the change of strategy implied by U.S. President Reagan's March 23 defense policy speech. We summarize and reprint below a sample of the coverage from the leading French newspapers and weeklies.

## Aviation

One of the most informative articles was published by the bi-monthly magazine *Aviation*, read mainly by space specialists, industry, and the military. In the June 15-30 issue, author Serge Brosselin presented a very comprehensive discussion of the "surprising efficiency" of the beam weapons, as well as of President Reagan's new strategic doctrine.

"On this topic [defensive systems] we must point to the elliptic but notable declaration by Gen. Bernard Capillon who, during the 'Sciences and Defenses' seminar organized by the defense ministry in Paris, advocated the development by France of a 'space defense' system. That such a proposal was formulated by a man whose position as chief of the Air Force general staff implies he has at his disposal high level information, must be perceived as a very new factor. . . . Evoking such possibilities makes official the fact that serious reflection has been initiated in France on that crucial subject. . . .

"During a closed conference held on April 21st in Paris . . . Dr. Uwe Parpart-Henke and Dr. Steven Bardwell considered, maybe a little quickly, that, given the advance of the Soviets in the mastery of these new technologies, the French nuclear deterrence has reached a first threshold of obsolescence. . . . It is only with the development of a program of anti-ballistic defense with laser beams that this aim could be reached, said Dr. Parpart. Not only does France possess the important technological capabilities to achieve such an enterprise, but French researchers, because of the high level of the knowledge they have in this domain, are able to make an interesting contribution to the ongoing researches."

Brosselin mentions that as a first step, laser weapons could be deployed in the Alps and Pyrénées to defend the nuclear missiles of the Plateau d'Albion, the submarine base at L'Ile Longue, and the city of Paris.

## Le Monde

The realization France might at present be undefended was the theme of an article by Michel Pinton, head of the opposition UDF Party, in *Le Monde* on June 16, titled "The French Nuclear Force; a New Maginot Line?" According to Pinton, the French deterrence doctrine is not coherent with the real strategy of the Soviet Union, which is to destroy in depth the military capabilities of its adversary with a nuclear first strike, before launching its conquering troops.

". . . missiles that we cannot either destroy or counter—the famous SS-20s—would have prepared the ground for this assault. In few minutes, at most a few hours, the weapons of France would have been destroyed."

## Le Figaro

The daily *Le Figaro* reviewed the technical aspects of beam weapons in a three-part series June 14-16 by science reporter Albert Ducrocq. Ducrocq discussed in detail the feasibility and efficiency of laser beams, listing the different experimental programs in the United States on the challenges raised by a laser-beam defensive system: the energy source for the beam, mirror production, and targeting accuracy. Regarding the French doctrine, he wrote:

"If France were attacked by surprise, her territory could be wiped away. This would not prevent her submarines from destroying around 30 cities of the aggressor. That knowledge would presumably protect us from attack. Such was the reasoning which, on a world scale, bore out the so-called balance of terror. . . . Everything changes with the laser beam: provided adequate logistical systems are in place, it can be expected that assaulting missiles will be exterminated with full certainty, thus allowing a completely different philosophy and a different language."

In concluding, Ducrocq mentioned that on a future flight of Challenger space shuttle, two experiments will be made bearing on beam weapons: one on infrared analysers for detection of missiles, and a second on targeting techniques for laser beams.

## La Lettre de Défense et Sécurité

The confidential news letter of the military think tank Defense and Security, which is headed by Jean-Claude Pigasse (also editor-in-chief of the economic weekly *Les Echos*), ran extensive coverage of the Fusion Energy Foundation's private meeting on April 21 in Paris, including the arguments of Uwe Parpart and Dr. Steven Bardwell of the FEF. The news letter itself is not in favor of beam weapons development and insinuated in its coverage that the policy is being advocated in the United States by a "powerful industrial lobby" which is presently "under congressional investigation."

## Le Matin

*Le Matin* affirmed on its science page on June 7: "Star wars is being prepared in the United States." The author maintained that on "Site 300" in the San Joachim Valley, researchers are developing the final "ultra-secret American weapon, the particle-cannon. In the 1990s, cannons will throw into the cosmos extremely dense nuclear particles able to drill through the thickest protections of adversary missiles." The laser weapon will be ready soon, the article continued, and "a new energy production system is being developed, based on the use of an original nuclear reactor design that would supply several hundred kilowatts in a concentrated form; these reactors would not be bigger than microwave ovens."