

NATO Assembly report endorses ABM defense policy

by Pierre Beaudry

A report supporting ballistic missile defense (BMD) systems was endorsed Oct. 7 by the Scientific and Technical Committee of the North Atlantic Assembly in The Hague. In large part, the section of the report dealing with BMD systems reflects proposals made by Lyndon H. LaRouche and the Fusion Energy Foundation.

The document, titled "Draft General Report on Ballistic Missile Defense and East-West Technology Transfer," was submitted by Thomas-Henry Lefèbre, a Canadian Liberal Member of Parliament who is currently the general rapporteur for the NATO parliamentary grouping. The significance of the BMD section of this document is that it alters a proposal issued last June which condemned President Reagan's March 23 proposal for ABM defense systems.

Last June the North Atlantic Assembly office in Brussels, headed by David Hobbs, issued a first draft report aimed at discrediting President Reagan's new strategic defense policy. The arguments were as follows: BMD systems are undesirable because they would escalate the strategic arms race; they "would reduce predicted survivability of satellites, since any system capable of destroying ICBMs in flight is by definition even more effective against relatively fragile satellites"; they would necessitate the abrogation of the ABM Treaty; this would lead to potential war in space, involving anti-satellite devices, space mines, etc.; BMD systems would "create the illusion of a 'technological fix' which reduces the risks, dangers and consequences of a superpower confrontation; this would involve massive defense expenditures, create dangerous and divisive current within the Alliance, and eliminate the deterrent effect of the other Alliance nuclear forces."

This list of arguments against BMD systems, reported back to Canada by Lefèbre, was submitted to a Canadian team which proceeded to answer back, point by point, to demonstrate the overwhelming advantages of BMD systems. The new version of the report reads:

"Technological progress has changed these perceptions, and we cannot, and should not, turn back the clock. New technology holds the promise of releasing humanity from the threat of annihilation implicit in the irrational MAD doctrine

of reciprocal suicide. MAD could be replaced by a rational doctrine aimed at the development of *defensive* systems to counter the weapons of mass destruction.

"a) . . . Even though BMD would not be totally impenetrable, it would make the prospect of a *disarming* first strike much less certain. . . . b) . . . ASAT [anti-satellite] systems already exist; the Soviet co-orbital killer satellite system is operational. . . . Any attack against satellites, however conducted, would be viewed as an act of war. c) . . . From the U.S. standpoint, the ABM Treaty was an attempt to impose universal acceptance of the MAD doctrine as a means of stabilizing the nuclear 'balance of terror'; from the Soviet standpoint, it afforded a means of avoiding a technological race in BMD which the Soviet Union would probably have lost. . . . d) Space will probably become a theatre of operations by the 1990s simply because space systems are the force multipliers of terrestrial military effectiveness. But war in space would be an extension of war on earth, and not an isolated, independent event. . . . e) The illusion of a 'technological fix' is no more dangerous than the delusion of controlled nuclear war. f) With or without space-based BMD deployment, work will continue on High Energy lasers for terrestrial application . . . and even if military spending increases, the impact on society may not be totally adverse (for example, U.S. spinoffs from the Apollo program have been estimated at 14:1. . . .) g) There are no reasons, either political or technical, which would preclude the employment of space-based BMD systems against the SS-20. . . . h) Whether or not the U.S. deploys BMD, the Soviets may proceed to do so. The ABM system around Moscow is operational, and currently being upgraded. The Soviets are far advanced in Directed Energy Weapons technology and their effort is three to five times larger than that of the U.S. The British and French nuclear deterrent forces will, in any event, probably have to contend with the prospects of Soviet space-based BMD deployment. . . .

"Whatever the arguments for or against BMD, this much is clear: the Soviet Union's BMD effort is substantial and probably much larger than its American counterpart. Consequently, the possibility of the Soviet Union deploying BMD systems outside the scope of the ABM Treaty cannot be overlooked. If the Soviet Union were to proceed with such deployment and the United States could not follow suit, that would be an alarming development. However undesirable some feel an American BMD system would be—or indeed Soviet and American BMDs—the presence of solely a Soviet system would still be less desirable. Thus, while Soviet BMD research continues, there is every reason for American research to continue also."

Thomas Lefèbre told *EIR* on Oct. 11 that the plenary session of the North Atlantic Assembly adopted a resolution Oct. 7 "urging member governments of NATO to continue to determine as accurately as possible the nature and scale of Soviet ABM systems in order to ensure that there will be no disparity in Soviet and U.S. BMD defense capabilities."