

Reagan's command decision was 1983's turning point

by Paul Gallagher

President Reagan's public announcement on March 23, 1983 that the United States could end the era of Mutually Assured Destruction by developing strategic energy-beam anti-missile defenses was the turning point of the entire period since the Cuban Missiles Crisis. "Let me share with you a vision of the future which offers hope. It is that we embark on a program to counter the awesome Soviet missile threat with measures that are defensive. Let us turn to the very strengths in technology that spawned our great industrial base and that have given us the quality of life we enjoy today.

"What if free people could live secure in the knowledge that their security did not rest upon the threat of instant U.S. retaliation to deter a Soviet attack; that we could intercept and destroy strategic ballistic missiles before they reached our own soil or that of our allies?

". . . Isn't it worth every investment necessary to free the world from the threat of nuclear war? . . . I call upon the scientific community in our country, those who gave us nuclear weapons, to turn their great talents now to the cause of mankind and world peace: to give us the means of rendering these nuclear weapons impotent and obsolete. . . .

"My fellow Americans, tonight we are launching an effort which holds the promise of changing the course of human history."

Mr. Reagan made a "command decision" against the grain of virtually his entire administration, a move that could not have been postponed for even six months without ensuring the victory of the suicidal "nuclear freeze" policy.

That decision, which stunned other world leaders, thrust to the fore the influence on strategic questions of *EIR* founder Lyndon H. LaRouche, Jr., whose policy proposals have been shown to be uniquely appropriate in this dangerous historical conjuncture, and who, since 1977, was the only public figure to organize a campaign for beam-weapons defense among the U.S. population at large. Often forgotten amidst the reams of "Star Wars" slanders which have appeared in the press is the fact that Reagan's March 23 speech elicited "the strongest reaction in calls and letters from the public of any action of this presidency," according to the



White House, and more than 70 percent of those intense responses from the citizenry during April and May were enthusiastic. Over the course of 1983, LaRouche and his associates have demonstrated that key elements of the European military-political leadership are also ready to join a beam-weapons effort.

Soviet official organs (*Pravda*, *Izvestia*, and *Literaturnaya Gazeta*) have threatened a "justified Soviet pre-emptive strike" against the United States to stop American development of anti-missile systems. The Soviets refused even the most informal discussions of Reagan's new doctrine after April, discussions in which LaRouche had been involved. On Nov. 15 *Izvestia* published a long attack on LaRouche as the reactionary evil genius of Reagan's new policy, and upon collaborators of LaRouche in European military and political circles organizing support for the U.S. beam-weapons commitment. At the Dec. 12 Geneva meeting of the Pugwash Conference, for 26 years the most intimate and cooperative arms control "dialogue" between the Soviets and their Western admirers, the Russian delegation was "stone cold," according to European press accounts; insiders said they demanded that their Western interlocutors "get rid of Reagan" or the Soviets would see no further value in the "Pugwash process."

Irrevocable decision

What has given the March 23 announcement such extraordinary impact despite continuing underfunding of U.S. beam-weapons development?

In a single speech, the President had rejected the deter-

rence strategy known as Mutually Assured Destruction (MAD), a strategy which deliberately left the U.S. population vulnerable to an enemy nuclear strike, and launched the doctrine of "Mutually Assured Survival," the parallel achievement of the supremacy of the defense.

President Reagan chose the vehicle of a high-profile public announcement of an offer to the Soviets to negotiate development of beam-weapons defenses by both sides, combined with the announcement that the United States would proceed to this development despite any Soviet reaction. Reagan thus put U.S. scientific and technological capabilities into a defensive arms race which until then had been an entirely secret drive by the Soviets alone to "break out" of the no-ABMs fantasies of 20 years of arms-control negotiations. The potential result, with a U.S. "catch-up" mobilization of beam-weapons technologies, would be a competitive but approximately simultaneous deployment of American-allied and Warsaw Pact ABM beam weapons systems in increasingly potent stages. This is the means to bring the era of mutual thermonuclear terror to an end, releasing economic and political energies for general technological progress and the industrialization of the underdeveloped world.

The Russian leadership had been anticipating its ABM "breakout" as the final step in assuring military-enforced domination over the West. As of John Collins' landmark 1980 survey, *U.S.-Soviet Military Balance: Concepts and Capabilities 1960-1980*, it was known that testing of beam weapons was "cornered by the Russians, according to most calculations." The first breakthroughs in high-power lasers and very strong pulsed-power sources for particle beams, making

anti-missile beam weapons a possibility, came in 1966-68. As of 1962 Marshal Sokolovskii's standard work *Military Strategy* was insisting that "particular attention is given to lasers (death rays); it is considered that in the future any missile or satellite can be destroyed with high-powered lasers."

The most recent CIA assessment, delivered to a Nov. 30 National Security Council meeting, states that a Soviet demonstration of an operational anti-missile beam weapon capability should be expected within one to two years, and Russian deployment of these systems will be possible by 1987. It is certain that the Soviets are this close, and quite possible that they are closer. It is also certain that they have the necessary national network of long-range battle management radars already in place to acquire and track U.S. missiles as targets for beam weapons, along with the supporting technology of massed ground-to-air anti-missile missiles, an additional "terminal" layer of anti-missile defense. The Nov. 30 NSC meeting considered this evidence as part of a massive package of Soviet violations of the SALT treaties—the so-called "breakout."

In July 1983, LaRouche submitted to Vice-President Bush and the U.S. Senate vital evidence concerning this deception. Henry Kissinger, a "weapons technologies expert" attending Pugwash conferences from 1961 to 1965, was uniquely well-informed about the Soviets' ABM advantage from the only interval in which they acknowledged and discussed it at international conferences. Kissinger, the chief negotiator for the SALT I treaty supposedly banning ABM systems, ensured that this knowledge was withheld from U.S. Presidents.

Thus as of March 1983 President Reagan faced a situation in which the Russians held an across-the-board advantage in the most crucial of all areas of military potential—defensive anti-missile systems—and would neither admit, discuss, negotiate, nor in any way slow down their attempts to build such systems. His speech was both an irrevocable commitment of the U.S. to this *defensive arms* technology race, and an effort to get the Soviet program out into the open.

The Reagan administration had concluded no later than July 1981, that deterrence could not be maintained more than a few more years under current rates of technological progress in offensive missiles and warheads, and that the Soviets were on a drive to "crack through" U.S. deterrent capability, maintaining the platitudes of MAD and the SALT treaties merely for diplomatic effect. At that time the President ordered studies of how to put U.S. missiles on a "Launch Under Attack" alert as MX was brought on line. In a February 1982 Washington speech, LaRouche insisted that the situation posed a more drastic choice—"nuclear freeze," i.e., surrender to the Soviet's increasing military superiority, or a public choice of the policy of beam weapons. In March, Reagan chose to act on that assessment, at the last possible point of effective action.

The so-called "Pugwash" group of scientists in the U.S. formed a war council against Reagan, accurately described by the Nov. 16 *New York Times* as a "shadow government"

grouped around Walter Mondale's presidential campaign. The group consisted of the leading figures who had attempted to mislead the public through the "Star Wars" scare stories selectively presented by the great majority of media. They had also been the leading arms experts and arms negotiators of the MAD doctrine era: Richard Garwin of Harvard and IBM; Col. Robert Bowman, kook refugee from Air Force weapons programs; the MIT group of scribbler Costa Tsipis and former ACDA officials Jack Ruina, Paul Doty and Bernard Feld; older "one-worlder" physicists like Hans Bethe, Sidney Drell, and Victor Weisskopf.

Weisskopf had publicly stated in April that "the Soviets will start a war to prevent stationing of such a system," implying that they would be justified. He circulated a statement against Reagan's new doctrine among U.S. scientists, and sent it to Andropov for his use with the international press, e.g. in Andropov's May 23 interview with the West German weekly *Der Spiegel*.

At an international conference of scientists at Erice, Sicily in late August, a scandal emerged attesting that this "shadow government" was working directly with the Soviet leadership. Leading Soviet academician and laser weapons scientist Yevgeny Velikhov told the Italian Communist newspaper *Unità*: "Richard Garwin has written many observations on nuclear war, in documents he sent to Andropov. Andropov has answered all the remarks, and to a large extent it is due to this discussion that my government a few days ago took the historic decision [Andropov's phony "ban on space weapons treaty" offer to visiting U.S. congressmen]."

The immediate ABM necessity

By September, following the Korean Air Lines massacre and the threat of Russian missile-bearing submarines near U.S. coasts, it became clear to some participants in the deliberations of President Reagan's "Fletcher Commission" on beam weapons policy that the U.S. required not just a shift in doctrine to defensive nuclear weapons, but *near-term deployment* of such defensive systems. The minimal goal of such a "Manhattan Project"-type mobilization was defined as capable defense against intermediate- or short-range ballistic missiles—the threat of submarine missiles and the SS-20s. It was also becoming known that the Russians were verging on such capabilities in an undefinably short time frame.

Dr. Lowell Wood of Lawrence Livermore Laboratory, a key beam weapons expert directly advising the NSC, told an American Legion meeting at the National Press Club in Washington on Dec. 1 that Soviet subs' missiles could decapitate the American command structure and East Coast capitol cities in three to five minutes. He also stated that they could be stopped with a crude first-stage defensive weapons system, which would require only \$10 billion in development and deployment funds. The European allies could develop such protection as well against the SS-20s.

In the face of this necessity the National Security Council has split between a "business as usual" faction allied to Kis-

singer and Shultz, and proponents of a beam-weapons "crash program." Rumors of an impending Reagan policy speech launching a "Manhattan Project" have abounded since October, when the depth of the Soviet confrontation drive began to sink in.

Officially, however, the White House still "believes" that the Soviets may return to the Geneva negotiations. That is the corrupting influence of the allies of Kissinger and NATO Secretary General Lord Carrington.

And officially, the fiscal year 1984 appropriation directly for high-power laser, particle beam and related directed energy technologies is only \$600 million, 20 percent more than the previous year. That is the consequence of the stranglehold

on White House economic policy by Federal Reserve head Paul Volcker and his appeasement-bound Swiss banking mentors. The completely inadequate official funding level persists despite the stated position of the Senate Appropriations Committee, citing the Soviet ABM "breakout," "that it is vitally important to keep the ABM systems technology program funded at as high a level as possible," and that "the Committee would entertain supplemental budget requests for these programs."

A second Reagan "command decision" is now imperative, to launch what LaRouche, Teller, and Colorado congressman Ken Kramer have publicly specified: a second Manhattan Project.

Lyndon LaRouche called the shots on strategic policy in 1983

Lyndon H. LaRouche, Jr.'s articles and statements appeared throughout the year in Executive Intelligence Review. Below are excerpts from his analyses of strategic military and economic questions.

Why a Beam-Weapons Arms Race Is Necessary, Dec. 22, 1982:

I insist that our choice is between beam-weapons development and early prospect of thermonuclear holocaust.

The core of my argument is that the cultural effects of a beam-weapons development will be to induce a renaissance of combined rationality and fear of war's consequences among the populations and leading institutions of nations. . . . It is the effects of policy of nations, upon the shaping of culture and cultural outlooks, which determine the political preconditions for warfare. . . .

MAD tends to become a lever of thermonuclear blackmail, and a source of encouragement to lunatic degrees of irrationality in relations among states. Governments which are inclined to be irrational believe that they are freed from taking into account the practical consequences of their policies. It is the cultivation of that "freedom" from obligations to weigh policies against their consequences, which is key to the growing danger of thermonuclear holocaust. . . .

If the Soviet Union is disposed to accept the kind of post-war world proposed by Franklin Roosevelt, and if rational

forces lead both nations, war between the powers is virtually impossible. . . . The long-term significance of launching a Beam-weapons development program, is the revival of a vigorous technological optimism, and with that a restoration of the hegemony of rationalism among the peoples and governments of the nations. . . .

LaRouche on the Bipartisan Challenge and the Question of his Presidential Candidacy, March 24:

It has been my repeatedly stated policy and practice since President Reagan was elected, that responsible Democrats should develop a bipartisan posture toward the Reagan administration. This view [is] richly justified by the step which President Reagan took last evening.

It has been, and continues to be my policy, that the great political parties of our nation have no proper self-interest as parties except the most vital interests of our nation. . . .

There are two reasons I would campaign for the Democratic presidential nomination of 1984. . . . My leading accomplishments as an economist, my knowledge and personal connections in most continents of the world, are resources of knowledge and commitment to command decisions on vital issues almost non-existent among other visible candidates. [And], one of the great parties of our nation, the Democratic Party, is being destroyed from within. That party urgently needs a leader, a man for a time of great crisis. . . .