

Mondale's KGB-approved attack on 'Star Wars' beam defense

by Susan Kokinda

Democratic presidential candidate Walter Mondale, in a speech in Cleveland, Ohio, April 24, vowed to do everything in his power to prevent the United States from acquiring a space-based beam-weapon shield that could protect this country from nuclear attack. "The clock is ticking," Mondale declared. "In less than 200 days, if Mr. Reagan is reelected, the arms race on Earth will be extended to the skies. If you help me get nominated, I can make the 1984 election a choice between 'Star Wars' and a space freeze. As President, I will do everything in my power to lead us to a safer world."

No wonder that the Soviet government newspaper *Izvestia* endorsed Mondale on Feb. 12, attributing his alleged "growth in popularity to his recent political pronouncements condemning the militarist course of the present American administration"!

Mondale's decision to make "Star Wars" the central topic of his election bid reflects the growing heat on him from the campaign of Democratic challenger Lyndon LaRouche, who is regularly described in the Soviet press as an "assassin" or a "troglydite" because of his indispensable role in formulating the administration's beam-weapon defense policy. The LaRouche Campaign has raised \$1.6 million from Democratic and other voters who favor the beam policy and despise Mondale. During the five days before Mondale arrived in Ohio to campaign, LaRouche had bombarded the state with radio and television broadcasts supporting the Strategic Defense Initiative.

Over 60 radio stations aired statements by LaRouche campaign spokesmen which, among other things, reported on a new poll published in *Defense Daily*. It showed that 75% of the U.S. population favors the plan for beam-weapon defense, and only 17% opposes it.

Whose 'bedtime story'?

In his speech to students at Case Western Reserve University in Cleveland, Mondale continued: "When Mr. Reagan explains 'Star Wars,' it is as comforting as listening to a bedtime story. There was an evil empire that threatened us with terrible weapons. But then one day, our side discovered a magic shield. When we stretched it out across the country, no missiles could penetrate it. From that day on, we stopped worrying about nuclear war and lived happily every after."

Mondale elaborated a series of Moscow-authored argu-

ments against the Strategic Defense Initiative (SDI): it is, he claimed, based on "flawed scientific premises," since the Soviets could easily develop countermeasures, and beam weapons would "kill" the ABM treaty. Mondale embraced the Scowcroft Commission's recent warning that development of beam weapons would violate Henry Kissinger's antiballistic-missile (ABM) treaty—a treaty, he neglected to mention, that is being torn up by the Soviets.

Mondale's alternative to ballistic-missile defense is to trust the Soviets, who are 10 years ahead of the United States in beam-weapon research and have already deployed space-based anti-satellite (ASAT) weapons. His five points to keep the heavens safe for Soviet ICBMs are:

"First, a temporary moratorium on testing antisatellite weapons.

"Second, negotiations to get a verifiable ban on those weapons.

"Third, a reaffirmation of our commitment to the ABM treaty.

"Fourth, a temporary moratorium on testing anti-satellite weapons.

"Fifth, building on that moratorium, negotiations for a verifiable treaty blocking weaponry in the heavens."

Liberals join the charge

As Mondale gave the marching orders, battalions of liberals in Washington joined the assault against the SDI and Defense Secretary Caspar Weinberger, the administration's most staunch advocate of the program. Weinberger has been targeted by a KGB-authored smear campaign, run through the *Washington "Watergate" Post*, whose intent is to drive him from office. The *Post* reported April 20 that the Justice Department and the FBI are investigating the Bechtel Corporation's alleged bribery of South Korean officials between 1978 and 1980—a period when Weinberger was a top officer and counsel for the company.

On the same day that Mondale was speaking in Cleveland, the congressional Office of Technology Assessment (OTA) released a document titled "Directed Energy Missile Defense in Space," authored by Ashton B. Carter, a contributor to a recent Brookings Institution tract against beam weapons. The OTA report concluded that "the prospect that emerging 'Star Wars' technologies, when further developed,

will provide a perfect or near-perfect defense system, literally removing from the hands of the Soviet Union the ability to do socially mortal damage to the United States with nuclear weapons, is so remote that it should not serve as the basis of public expectation or national policy about ballistic missile defense (BMD)."

Since a 100% perfect defense is impossible, the document claims, and since "the wisdom of deploying less-than-perfect ballistic missile defenses remains controversial," the United States should give up on a serious effort.

Mondale's allies in the Congress have escalated their own assault on the U.S. program. At April 25 hearings before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee's subcommittee on arms control, convened by the ardently anti-beam-weapon Sen. Larry Pressler (R-S.D.), former Democratic presidential contender Sen. John Glenn (D-Ohio) charged: "The President has misled the people of this country," into believing that the SDI would work and "oversold it for political reasons. . . . The whole thing rests on specific technologies that haven't yet been invented." Foreign Relations Committee chairman Sen. Charles Percy (R-Ill.), one of the most vociferous supporters of the ABM treaty, announced that he found the SDI "disturbing," because the Soviets would inevitably be able to overwhelm any defensive system.

Senators Paul Tsongas (D-Mass.) (Del.) then engaged in a colloquy with the President's science adviser Dr. George Keyworth, and Dr. Robert Cooper from the Pentagon, over how the President would be able to activate the beam-weapon defense system fast enough if he were in the shower! Tsongas concluded that the President's aides would have to be "in the next shower." When Keyworth and Cooper refused to dignify this line of questioning by allowing it to continue, Biden exploded: "You have convinced me I don't want this program in the hands of a man like you."

The first congressional action in the area of space weapons is likely to come within the next several weeks, when Pressler's Senate Joint Resolution 129, banning the testing and deployment of ASATs, is expected to come to a floor vote. Senate Majority Leader Howard Baker (R-Tenn.), recently helped orchestrate the Nicaragua covert aid debacle on the floor of the Senate, has reportedly promised Pressler that his resolution will be put on the Senate calendar. Both Pressler and Mondale see banning the deployment of ASATs as a necessary first step toward preventing the development of a space-based beam-weapon defense system.

Pentagon tries to hold its ground

Secretary of Defense Weinberger and his allies are waging a rear-guard action to protect the beam-weapon program from this onslaught. In his first appearance before a congressional committee, newly appointed SDI director Lt. Gen. James Abrahamson delivered testimony establishing the scope and intent of the SDI, testimony which was clearly worked out with Weinberger to counteract some of the damage done by previous, closet SDI opponents from the Pentagon. How-

ever, Abrahamson and Weinberger are still working within the confines of the agreement established between President Reagan and Henry Kissinger to limit the beam-weapon program to research, not deployment. In his April 24 testimony before the Senate Armed Service Committee's subcommittee on Strategic and Theater Nuclear Forces, Abrahamson repeated, "remember, this is only a research program," several dozen times during his two hours of testimony. When asked point-blank by Sen. Carl Levin (D-Mich.) if he agreed with the Scowcroft Commission's characterization of the deployment of beam weapons as "extremely" risky, Abrahamson replied that he did.

But within those confines, Abrahamson established several singular points. He stressed that "the purpose of the Strategic Defense Initiative (SDI) military forces. Accomplishment of both missions is essential to the ultimate goal, which is to provide security for the people of the United States and our allies. . . . I want to make a special point of the fact that our research is focusing on defenses against ballistic missiles of all ranges, including tactical- and theater-range systems as well as ICBMs and SLBMs. As Secretary Weinberger has indicated, our concept of an 'effective' defense is one which protects our Allies as well as the United States."

Abrahamson's insistence that Europe is to be included in the SDI immediately brought Sam Nunn, the ranking Democrat on the Senate Armed Services Committee, into the fray. Nunn, who has an undeserved reputation for being pro-defense, is one of the leading congressional proponents of the decoupling of Western Europe from the United States, arguing that U.S. troops should be withdrawn from Europe, which should defend itself with conventional forces. Nunn hit the ceiling when Abrahamson proposed the extension of the SDI to Europe, and charged that Abrahamson's version suggested "goals far beyond any [previous administration] witnesses." Nunn sputtered that "now you are talking about defending our allies, defending population centers, abolishing all offensive weapons. . . . I think the Soviets are operating off of a much smaller goal. We need to pin our program down."

Abrahamson insisted that the SDI had "people protection" as its goal and that it went hand in hand with an arms-control strategy aimed at reducing offensive weapons: "We do not believe that the SDI is the beginning of 'another enormously expensive arms race.'

tems could assist us in achieving the arms-control goals of reduced ballistic-missile forces and enhanced stability. If defensive systems with sufficient effectiveness to enable the United States and the Soviet Union to decrease their dependence on ballistic-missile systems prove feasible, the security of both nations could be significantly enhanced at reduced levels of offensive arms." Abrahamson likened this kind of arms control, in contrast to the last 20 years of arms control, to the white line down the middle of the highway: "it is in the vital interests of both sides to stay on their own side."