

# Ending the age of thermonuclear terror

by Lyndon H. LaRouche, Jr.

*In a soon-to-be-released policy paper on the necessity for an urgent reform of the U.S. defense posture, EIR Contributing Editor Lyndon H. LaRouche explains why the security of the nation can no longer be premised on the viability of the MAD (mutually assured destruction) doctrine as a strategic deterrent to thermonuclear war. LaRouche proposes the rapid development of a beam-weapons-based U.S. "anti-missile missile" system and U.S.-Soviet cooperation in the deployment of such anti-missile systems to ensure that no nation anywhere in the world can successfully launch a thermonuclear attack. We reprint here the opening section of the policy paper. The remainder of the report, which will be printed by the National Democratic Policy Committee under the headline Only Beam-Weapons Could Bring to an End the Kissingerian Age of Mutual Thermonuclear Terror: A Proposed Modern Military Policy of the United States, deals with the history of beam-weapon anti-missile systems and at length with the history of the republican military policy first formulated during the 15th century in Renaissance Italy.*

## 1. End the age of thermonuclear terror

It is now approximately 30 years since the Soviet Union and United States, respectively, developed a deployable form of thermonuclear bomb. It is now approximately a quarter-century since the likes of John Foster Dulles and then-youthful Henry A. Kissinger introduced to the United States a thermonuclear strategic policy appropriately known by the acronym *MAD—Mutually Assured Destruction*.

So, for a quarter-century, the population of the world has lived under the perpetual terror of ever-ready intercontinental thermonuclear warfare. Since the inauguration of President Jimmy Carter, and especially since the first visit of Secretary Cyrus Vance to Moscow thereafter, the likelihood of actual intercontinental thermonuclear barrages has rapidly become greater than at any time since the "Cuba Missile Crisis" of 1962.

Beginning with the Watergate ouster of President Richard Nixon, and accelerating following Carter's inauguration, Moscow has embarked on accelerated preparations for possible thermonuclear war. It has been discovered recently that recent and current Soviet

military expenditures have been approximately 50 percent or more greater than the earlier largest estimate compiled by the U.S. Central Intelligence Agency. Meanwhile, since the Arthur Burns recession under President Gerald Ford, and accelerating under President Carter, there has been a collapse of U.S. military capabilities at the same time United States' policy has been committed to attempts to roll back the borders of the Soviet bloc and even, as stated official policy, to destroy the Soviet Union from within through promotion of insurrections among so-called national minorities. Meanwhile, it is rightly said by one leading European official, that Federal Reserve Chairman Paul A. Volcker has been doing Moscow's work of destroying the military capabilities of the Western Alliance.

Beginning the April-May 1982 period, into the scheduled European-missiles showdown with Moscow during early 1983, the world is faced with an unprecedented scale and intensity of eruption of strategic hot-spots, under conditions Volcker's wrecking of the U.S. economy has plunged most of the world into the initial phase of a new general depression. All of this proceeds under the influence of a delusion, recently echoed by Sen. Edward Kennedy and others, that the destructive force of the U.S. strategic thermonuclear arsenal affords our nation adequate protection, such that the other elements of our national military capability can be permitted to drift in the direction of the stone age.

It is true that the consequences of intercontinental thermonuclear barrages are beyond the imagination of most persons. The general best estimate is that the first thermonuclear assaults upon the mainland United States will kill between 160 and 180 million residents (and unlucky visitors). In a study prepared for a NATO government by a leading European scientific center, it has been estimated that if only 10 percent of the superpowers' thermonuclear arsenals were exploded, the long-lived radioactive cesium produced would eliminate all higher forms of life throughout this planet within two years of the barrage.

Can this nightmare not be ended?

The worst feature of the Kissingerian MADness doctrine is the false assumption that the foreknown consequences of thermonuclear warfare are sufficient to

prevent any superpower from actually launching a general thermonuclear assault. This obsession with MADness has gone so far as to foster the doctrine that Moscow would tolerate a limited, Europe-based nuclear assault on Russia itself without unleashing a general thermonuclear barrage against the mainland United States.

The consequences of thermonuclear warfare are an awesome deterrent. It is false, to the point of suicidal absurdity, to assume that that deterrent effect is an *absolute deterrent*. Assuming that the fingers on the superpowers' buttons are not insane, *there is only one condition under which a superpower would launch a thermonuclear salvo against the homeland of its adversary*. Any superpower would do so if it believed that failure to launch such a salvo meant the assured *political* destruction of its homeland, or if it believed the government of the other superpower is insane enough to be preparing a preemptive thermonuclear ("first strike") barrage.

Any dedication by the United States, either to theater-limited nuclear warfare in Central Europe, or to "rolling back the Yalta-defined borders between East and West," leads to the point of no-return at which a general intercontinental thermonuclear war becomes, under present arrays of forces, virtually a certainty.

If the government of the United States continues its adherence to the monetary policies set into motion August 1971, or, worse, the Volcker monetarist policies of the present moment, most of the world is already plunging into the depths of a new general depression far deeper, more prolonged, and qualitatively more devastating than the economic depression preceding the war of 1939-45. The opening phase of the new depression was entered during the interval October 1981-February 1982. On condition the presently increasing role of the military consolidates and strengthens the relative stability and economic power of the Comecon and Warsaw Pact, the growing economic weakness of the Western Alliance nations, accentuated by eruptions of strategic "hot-spots," creates a totally unacceptable strategic shift for the United States, a threat of the political subordination of the United States to emerging Moscow hegemony. Under such conditions, almost anything becomes possible.

On condition the friends of Walter Sheridan do not succeed in their present determination to oust President Reagan on pretext of manufactured scandal during the months ahead, the Moscow-Washington confrontation-crisis almost certain now for the months ahead will lead to new, emergency forms of crisis-management negotiations between Washington and Moscow, as both capitals seek to adduce mutually acceptable options for avoiding what otherwise appears to be a certain thermonuclear confrontation between the two superpowers.

In reality, new agreements mutually acceptable to

both governments are available, agreements which involve no capitulation by one side to the other, and which yet introduce new institutions of stability into superpower relationships. Unfortunately, especially under the influence of today's news media, there is usually a large discrepancy between reality and the prevailing perceptions. Under present U.S. monetary and military policies, it will be impossible to bring about fruitful changes in Soviet policy. Unless the United States changes drastically its present monetary and military policies, the thermonuclear catastrophe born of Kissingerian MADness threatens to become the kind of war no one wished to believe could actually happen.

As we approach this early period of acute crisis, it is urgent that the government of the United States be prepared to proceed from both monetary policies and military policies fundamentally different than the policy-trends which have increasingly dominated our policy-making over the recent 15 years. It is also important that such policy-changes be discussed openly, within sight and hearing of Moscow's leadership. The immediate object of such open formulation of changed policies is, that when President Reagan enters into crisis-management negotiations with Moscow, at the virtual brink of a thermonuclear confrontation, the President must have available new policy-options, options which Moscow's leading circles have studied earlier, and which therefore might be more readily considered by Moscow's negotiating-teams under those conditions of crisis.

No workable solution to the impending crisis can be achieved through the present agenda of SALT or START negotiations. Moscow will not accept, under any conditions, an arms agreement which includes the emplacement of any quantity of cruise and Pershing-II missiles in Britain, the Federal Republic of Germany, Spain or Sicily. The point is that such nuclear missiles, especially Pershing-IIs, decrease the warning-time on launch of attack on Russia from about 25 minutes (presently) to as few as several minutes. If the United States insists on deploying Pershing-IIs in Germany, for example, Moscow will retaliate by measures including probably placing Soviet nuclear missiles within minutes of the mainland cities of the United States—this does not mean automatically the emplacement of Soviet missiles in Cuba; 20 years in the advancement of technology of strategic weaponry have produced a range of new options for such deployments.

Apart from the particular issue of Pershing-IIs, no mere reduction in the size of thermonuclear arsenals will accomplish anything of more than cosmetic importance. Reduced arsenals would remain many times larger than would be required to eliminate all higher forms of life on this planet. In any case, disarmament and peace negotiations were the diplomatic swindles preceding the last World War, together with those

worse-than-usual "peace movements" which proliferated under the sponsorship of Bertrand Russell and Aldous Huxley during the late 1930s.

In any case, the only "sincere motivation" for negotiating presently some disarmament in either Moscow or Washington presently is the desire to reduce the economic burden of military-expenditures budgets upon the respective nations.

There are two additional, relatively technical flaws with the continuation of "thermonuclear deterrence." "First strike," the wishful doctrine which presumes that both sides will limit intercontinental thermonuclear salvos to enemy missiles and some other purely military targets, was always intrinsically absurd. Under the

conditions a rational superpower will risk thermonuclear warfare, it will commit first salvos adequate to destroy the in-depth war-making potential of the adversary power; meaning the cities of the adversary nation. Now, the belief that submarine-launched thermonuclear missiles represent an assured "second strike," retaliatory capability is becoming a delusion. Such submarines are themselves becoming intrinsically detectable and targetable as part of the range of "first strike" targets. Submarine-based missiles no longer represent an assured "second strike" capability; their military usefulness is now limited to forward-based "first launch" capabilities.

In brief, all strategic-arms-limitation diplomacy is

## Beam weapons and how they work

Conventional technologies, taking advantage of spectacular advances in guidance and propulsion technologies over the past five years, can be used to build an "anti-missile missile." According to authoritative studies by the Los Alamos Scientific Laboratory ("Ballistic Missile Defense—A Quick-Look Assessment," Office of Planning and Analysis, LASL-UR-80-1578, REV, June, 1980), the United States could deploy a system of both low-altitude missiles and higher-altitude interception techniques within five years, with substantial protection available within as little as three years. These systems by themselves are not sufficient, but as part of a comprehensive defense strategy they acquire a significance and effectiveness that they alone lack.

There are four members of the family of beam weapons which can be combined to create an effective ballistic-missile defense system for the United States. They are: 1) **Laser anti-missile systems.** Using intense, highly focused light energy produced by a laser, this beam weapon would use its ability to project large energies at the speed of light to burn through an incoming ballistic missile. Both laser weapons stationed in space and on the earth have been studied for application to the destruction of ICBMs. Lasers such as those proposed for anti-ballistic missile systems have been used by the both the United States and the Soviet Union to destroy airplanes and helicopters in flight, and, according to authoritative sources, the Soviet Union has downed a ballistic missile with such a laser. The U.S. does not even plan such a test for another 18 months.

2) **Particle beam anti-missile systems.** In this version of a beam weapon, a high energy stream of atomic or sub-atomic particles is used to create a shock-wave which destroys the target. These particles, traveling near the speed of light, cause intense mechanical stresses and pulses of radiation which can disable a ballistic missile. Such devices have been tested at Soviet weapons laboratories on a weapons scale; the United States does not plan such tests for several years.

3) **Electromagnetic wave beam weapons.** These weapons use intense beams of microwaves or radio waves to destroy their target. The intense heating and electrical fields caused by the intense radiation are known to be effective means for disabling the delicate electronics on a ballistic missile as well as for disabling the satellites used to guide and target the ICBMs. The Soviet Union is recognized to be many years ahead of the United States in the experimental development of intense, directed microwave sources. The extent of the Soviet deployment of these microwaves is not publicly known.

4) **Plasma beam weapons.** It has been known for many years that discrete pulses of highly ionized gas (plasmas) can be generated and accelerated. In a phenomenon closely resembling ball lightning, a self-contained structure of magnetic fields and charged particles can travel long distances with large amounts of energy contained in the plasma-field structure. Studies show that as much as the energy equivalent of five pounds of dynamite (10 megajoules) could be stored in a plasma ball about one-half inch across, traveling at velocities in excess of 1,000 miles per second. This energy, in the highly concentrated form of a plasma-field configuration, would completely destroy an ICBM. The Soviet Union has been conducting active research on this phenomenon since at least the middle 1950s and has recently experimented with large-scale plasma acceleration in the atmosphere.

becoming useless babbling, at least insofar as this diplomacy affects strategic military capabilities of the respective powers.

*There is no solution to the continued balance of thermonuclear terror which is not premised on the ability of at least one of the superpowers to destroy a proverbial "ninety-nine and forty-four one-hundredths percent" of the incoming missiles and thermonuclear-armed aircraft deployed against its national homeland.*

In principle, such an anti-missile capability now exists, in the form of what are properly termed *relativistic-beam anti-missile weapons systems*. We propose, we insist, that the reformed military policy of the United States be premised upon a commitment to a "crash program" for developing and deploying such anti-missile beam-weapon systems.

We go further. We propose that the adoption of such a high-technology answer to the thermonuclear balance of terror become the central reference-point for a comprehensive reform of United States military doctrine and organization of the Defense Department.

On the assumption that the Reagan administration adopts such a comprehensive reform as policy prior to impending crisis-management negotiations with Moscow, this new U.S. military policy can be the basis for a new approach to armaments negotiations with the Soviet leadership.

Today, a growing number of nations have nuclear-weapons capabilities. Rapidly, those same nations will acquire missile delivery-capabilities for nuclear weapons. Most nations with an established fission-weapons capability have also the potential for creating thermonuclear weapons systems. Thus, even if the balance of terror between the two superpowers were regulated, third powers, increasingly, have the potential for starting a thermonuclear war which must more or less immediately embroil the superpowers' own thermonuclear arsenals.

Under these conditions, the military component of Washington-Moscow negotiations must include agreement to rapid development of relativistic-beam anti-missile weapons systems by both superpowers. Two urgent benefits are to be realized by such agreement. First, to the degree we create conditions of assured destruction for intercontinental thermonuclear weapons systems under war-fighting regimes, the value of such thermonuclear weapons is reduced, and then, and only under such conditions, both superpowers can agree to demobilize such components of their respective arsenals. Second, neither superpower must tolerate the use of even limited thermonuclear warfare by third powers. We must agree to shoot down third-power nuclear weapons on launch by aid of means including orbiting beam-weapon-armed space platforms.

With such agreements, the age of mutual thermonuclear terror is brought toward its conclusion.

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## Democratic Party

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# Douglas raises storm in Pennsylvania

by Mary McCourt

The campaign for National Democratic Policy Committee backed-candidate Steven Douglas for the Democratic Party's gubernatorial nomination in Pennsylvania is creating an institution to fill the vacuum of leadership in Pennsylvania politics at a time when the state is facing the worst economic crisis in its history.

Pennsylvania, the leading industrial and energy-producing state in the 19th century, was devastated by the Great Depression of the 1930s, and what remains of its economy is threatened with a total shutdown in the current one. Although Pennsylvania has been traditionally a Republican state, the policies of the NDPC candidate—based on the four-point program of *EIR* founder Lyndon H. LaRouche which calls for gold-reserve-backed, long-term, low-interest credit, infrastructure improvement, nuclear development, and a vigorous campaign to stop drug traffic and use—are clearly essential to reversing the depression conditions in the state.

The following is an interview with the candidate by *EIR*'s Mary McCourt.

**EIR:** What effect is your campaign having on the Pennsylvania electorate?

**Douglas:** At this point we have over several thousand campaign volunteers, distributing literature in the towns and neighborhoods across the state. These people are farmers, members of labor unions, small businessmen, the traditional backbone of the Democratic Party. This is the biggest grassroots campaign effort that has been seen in the state in decades. Tens of thousands of residents of Pennsylvania who had been disenfranchised are being brought into active policy-making.

I have been very pleased with the response from regional labor leaders. Emil Dicimbre, the former president of the Building Trades Council in Beaver County, is my campaign manager for Beaver County, one of the industrial heartlands of Pennsylvania. My campaign coordinator for Fayette County is Tom Shetterly, the busi-