
President Reagan

'Geneva agreement won't stop the SDI'

President Ronald Reagan used the occasion of an interview with *New York Times* correspondents on Feb. 12 to serve notice: No form of Geneva agreement would lead him to halt his Strategic Defense Initiative. The SDI program to develop laser- and other energy-beam defenses against nuclear missiles will continue no matter what the Soviets offer to do at arms-control talks.

First, said the President, the SDI will be researched and developed. Then, he would be prepared to "internationalize" the deployment of the defensive shield—a reference to his repeated previous offers to "share the technology" not only with allies, but with the Soviets themselves.

The President was asked what would become of the SDI were the Russians to agree to deep reductions in offensive weapons. "Would you still want to proceed with this Strategic Defense Initiative or would you be ready to call it off in return for that?"

The President replied: "No, I would want to proceed with what we're doing, which is research to discover whether there is such a weapon and whether it is practical, feasible. . . . My own view would be that if that is determined and we can produce such a weapon, then before deployment I'd be willing to sit down, and in a sense internationalize—in other words, to negotiate then before there would be any deployment . . . to make sure that they understood that we weren't trying to create the ability of a first strike ourselves, that our goal was still the elimination of nuclear weapons, and that I would see that defensive weapon as another step in attaining that goal.

". . . That would eliminate any of the protests that some of the people on the Soviet side have made that we're seeking a first-strike capability. I don't think anyone could honestly believe that the United States is interested in such a thing or ever would put itself in that position."

The *Times* reporter queried: "So proceeding with the Strategic Defense is independent of whatever agreement is reached on offensive weapons?"

"That's right," replied Mr. Reagan. "Because it's not in violation of the ABM treaty, and they have been conducting—you know, who are they kidding? They've been conducting research in this sort of thing for a long time. And

they already have far beyond anything we have, and we believe, in violation of the ABM treaty on that kind of defense. And we're seeking a non-nuclear weapon that could render these weapons obsolete."

Having thus thrown out all the Chamberlain-like assumptions of Henry Kissinger as to the SDI's status as a "bargaining chip," the President proceeded to throw out the arguments advanced by arms-negotiator Max Kampelman and Zbigniew Brzezinski, the national security adviser to Jimmy Carter, who recently proposed that the United States agree to limit the SDI to "point defense," i.e., of missile silos and other selected targets.

Said the President: "I want a defense that simply says that if somebody starts pushing the button on those weapons, we've got a good chance of keeping all or at least the bulk of them from getting to the target. . . . because if it's around missile sites—that's the type of weapon anymore in which there's no way to restrain that from killing any number of people. . . . I think if you have a defensive weapon—I don't think in terms of let's put it around this place and that place. Let's put it in such a way that those missiles aren't going to get to their target."

The President compared SDI technologies to the gas mask. Gas masks are in the arsenal of every army in the world, despite the fact that poison gas is outlawed.

Both the Eastern Establishment and the Kremlin have been left reeling from the momentum built up for the SDI in just the first few weeks of the President's second term. Will the Russians now leave the Geneva talks they have repeatedly said are conditional on "preventing an arms race in space"? Or will they stay, in order to maintain some form of leverage and exchange on the emerging new defense technologies?

In either event, the only substantial threat to the SDI—barring assassination of the President and such other key players as Lyndon and Helga Zepp-LaRouche—would be a world financial catastrophe courtesy of the policies of the International Monetary Fund, centered on combined oil price deflation and imminent default of oil-producers like Mexico and Venezuela, and the \$215 billion U.S. farm debt. This could happen without any help, or the Russians and their friends at the top of the Western financial world could choose to exercise their capability to trigger such a collapse, blowing out the U.S. defense budget.

If Mutually Assured Destruction centered on separating military from economic strength, the President's technological quest for Mutually Assured Survival restores that essential connection. The SDI can only work if it is approached as an *emergency economic mobilization*, predicated on early reorganization of the world monetary system, without the IMF, and associated emergency measures to put America's farms and factories back to work.

With President Roosevelt's 1939-43 mobilization in mind, the President, having clearly defined the SDI policy, must now to take the unilateral executive action that places the SDI on a full, crash-program basis.