

## Report from Paris by Yves Messer

### Mitterrand sabotaging the SDI

*The President's Eureka project is designed to pit Europe against Ronald Reagan's policy of Mutually Assured Survival.*

**A**t the Bonn summit of the heads of state of the world's top seven industrial nations, French President François Mitterrand affected to oppose his colleagues' views on just about every subject. In particular, he staunchly opposed European participation in the U.S. Strategic Defense Initiative, publicly stating: "In the present state of this proposal, France will not participate."

The result is a very difficult position for Mitterrand: After the summit and Reagan's European tour, he is the most isolated of the European Community's leaders.

He evidently thought he could seduce his European partners with a "tricky" response to the American beam-weapon development program. The trick is the "Eureka" project.

Eureka is a proposal for a large European research project in laser and particle beams, new materials, fifth-generation computers, and optronics. The problem is, that even if, formally, the idea is good, neither the financing nor the institutional framework were mentioned.

Not unexpectedly, the concrete American proposals are more attractive to Europeans than mere words—even those of a French President.

This goes for French firms, too.

On May 6, the French daily *Le Monde* revealed that, according to NATO leaks, two major French firms are already officially working on the American program: the CILAS (a branch of the large Compagnie Générale d'Electricité, specializing in lasers) and the Thomson-CSF group. The

first is studying laser-reflecting mirrors, and the second high-power lasers for ground deployment.

The news is already prompting warnings about a French "brain drain" to the United States.

However, Mitterrand is not completely stupid. What he clearly intends with the "Eureka" proposal, is to take control of the SDI work in Europe and make sure it doesn't really get off the ground, while otherwise doing his utmost to sabotage the American effort. He will stress the need for a reinforced European Community as the only way to counter American economic and technological "expansionism" in connection with the program. That which the French media have dubbed Mitterrand's historic European initiative, is, concretely, a supranational European program against the Western Alliance.

This is what Mitterrand would have adopted at the next EC summit in Milan in June.

That Eureka is not an "initiative," but a diversionary tactic in reaction to the SDI, was spelled out in an interview given to the magazine *Libération* on May 3 by Claude Cheysson, Mitterrand's former foreign minister. He emphasized that there is "no Soviet threat," and that the American program "threatens to upset the balance and spur a new arms race." He said nothing of Russian efforts to develop laser armaments, well ahead of the Americans, and called talk of a Soviet threat "Cold War hysteria." When the Americans say the SDI will "serve to protect Europe . . . no one believes it for a moment."

Of course, since most of Europe has already accepted U.S. Defense Secretary Weinberger's proposal for a joint research project, Mitterrand is now exposed as a saboteur. Even Jacques Chirac, the leader of the major French opposition party, the RPR, reacted in an unusual fashion, attacking Mitterrand for being against both European unity and the Western Alliance.

Nevertheless, Mitterrand still seems to believe he can reverse the situation. The French foreign ministry, through its think tank, the Centre d'Analyse et de Prévisions (CAP), has now issued a study on the SDI, and a born-again Eureka proposal.

The source alone throws the study into question. CAP head Serge Plattard two years ago argued that the American political figure Lyndon LaRouche was proven to be a KGB agent by his advocacy of beam-weapon development. The implication, of course, is that President Reagan and Defense Secretary Weinberger are, too.

The CAP report states that, on the one hand, the American SDI will be a strictly military project with few spin-offs into civilian industries, but that, on the other hand, it will deepen the technological gap between the United States and Europe. Therefore, European firms should not participate, since the program is allegedly aimed at both re-arming the United States and financing its technological progress. Europe should undertake "realistic" research in areas closer to market demands: computers, artificial intelligence, new materials. Left out are high-power lasers—the key to both missile defense and large productivity boosts in many industries, as well as breakthroughs in such fields as medicine.