

## Eye on Washington by Nicholas F. Benton

### Renewed assault against the President's SDI

Following Defense Secretary Caspar Weinberger's announcement of an escalated funding schedule for the development of the Strategic Defense Initiative (SDI), self-proclaimed "experts" of various colorations are preparing to shoot down the President's program.

First, there are those who argue that the President is going "too slow" with SDI, and that the program's emphasis on lasers and other "new physical principles" is too exotic, expensive, and time-consuming, and should be dropped in favor of immediate deployment of "off-the-shelf" kinetic-energy technologies—even if they don't work. Second are the liberals who have accepted Soviet arguments against a U.S. Strategic Defense Initiative, and are calling for a ban on SDI development.

Exemplary of the first category is Dr. Robert Jastrow, co-founder of NASA's Goddard Institute, and of the second category is former CIA director William Colby.

### For an obsolete SDI

Jastrow, in a press briefing at the George Marshall Foundation on Dec. 29, cited a speech by CIA deputy director Robert Gates in San Francisco in November 1986, about the threat of an "imminent Soviet anti-ballistic-missile breakout," as evidenced by the discovery of three new phased-array radars on the western borders of the Soviet Union.

This means, Jastrow correctly concluded, that we may not have the 10 years suggested by President Reagan at the Reykjavik summit before deployment of SDI is feasible. Given that the Soviets have been working on military applications of lasers and directed-energy systems for 18 years, they could spring a first-generation, nationwide ABM "breakout" at almost any time.

On all of this, Jastrow is correct. However, he used these alarming facts to conclude that the U.S. SDI effort must focus on a near-term deployment of kinetic-energy "smart bullets," which can be fired from satellites at Soviet rockets in their boost phase.

Jastrow admitted that deploying such a technology would cost \$120 billion, but claimed that it is our only chance to catch up with the Soviets in the near term.

Jastrow, who was the keynote speaker for a recent Unification Church (Moonie) science conference in Washington, could not answer questions from this reporter about why we should spend \$120 billion on an obsolete technology when the Soviets are working on "new physical principles."

Jastrow's line of argument against the SDI has heretofore been the trademark of the "High Frontier" operation of Lt. Gen. (ret.) Danny Graham. Its objective has been to starve research into lasers and related technologies based on "new physical principles," substituting "kinetic" weapons developed two decades ago. The chief problem with these weapons, is that they are so slow as to be hopelessly ineffective in stopping a Russian missile barrage.

Some, like Zbigniew Brzezinski, still argue that such kinetic weapons should be used to defend only U.S. missile sites in a "point-defense." But, since the administration is solidly

against this and in favor of a total population defense, others, like Jastrow, have devised a way to propose kinetic weapons for a forward defense against Soviet rockets in their boost phase.

Jastrow's argument has become a favorite among many conservatives in Congress, including Sen. Dan Quayle (R-Ind.) and Sen. Malcolm Wallop (R-Wyo.), who has been mentioned as a possible replacement for ailing CIA director William Casey. The Reserve Officers' Association has also joined in.

### Colby and the liberals

The SDI's liberal opponents are singling out that program, along with the MX missile, as examples of budget-busting defense spending—even though they account for only a minuscule percentage of the defense budget.

Out of the total defense budget request of \$312 billion for FY88, the programs most targeted by the liberals include: SDI, \$5.78 billion; MX and Midgetman, \$4.1 billion; two Nimitz-class aircraft carriers, \$696 million for start-up; Air Force anti-satellite program, \$440 million; Navy Trident II nuclear missile and Trident-carrying Ohio submarine, \$4.95 billion.

It was something of a surprise to see William Colby, director of the CIA from 1973-77, come out so openly against the SDI in three appearances in Washington during the second week of January—one with anti-SDI activist Dr. Richard Garwin of the Union of Concerned Scientists, another with former Carter administration arms negotiator Paul Warnke, and the third in testimony before the Senate Armed Services Committee.

Colby professed total ignorance of the recent CIA revelations about Soviet phased-array radars, in discussion with this reporter.