

Business Briefs

Defense

U.S. needs outside help to deploy SDI

"Without help from the outside, the United States couldn't deploy the Strategic Defense Initiative," a senior aerospace industry official said in response to the recent Mikhail Aleksandrov article in *Soviet Military Affairs* and the commentary by Lyndon LaRouche.

"The U.S. will need active involvement by Japan and the Europeans to successfully deploy a defense system. This represents a golden opportunity for the Russians as well to get in on the SDI," he said.

The source, who once was responsible for a \$180 million per year R&D program, warned that there is such a tremendous drain on the pool of competent American engineers and scientists that, within one to two years, the United States will cease to function as a technologically literate nation. He emphasized, however, that a large pool of mostly retired industrial engineers and research scientists who could be called upon. "But one or two years from now, many of these people will either be dead or too old to really contribute. If we wait too long, we are finished."

Science

Galaxy discovery portends paradigm shift

A "great wall" of galaxies discovered by Margaret Geller and John Huchra of the Harvard-Smithsonian Center for Astrophysics, and reported last November, has major implications for cosmology and scientific theory. One of the investigators, whose views were reported in the March *Harvard Magazine*, elaborated in an interview with bi-monthly journal *21st Century Science & Technology* on Feb. 27.

The discovery is of a "great wall" of galaxies only 15 million light-years thick, but more than 150 million light-years wide, and at least 500 million light-years long. Its full extent is still not known. The discovery resulted from mapping all of the galaxies in only two slices

of a sphere around Earth with a radius of 450 million light-years.

According to prevailing theory, the universe is supposed to be increasingly homogeneous as one moves to larger and larger scales. The findings of Geller and Huchra show that instead, it gets "lumpier and lumpier." Instead of being uniformly distributed, galaxies appear to be concentrated in "cell walls," with the cells themselves being empty, like the wax in an emptied honeycomb. Geller thinks the great wall may be a portion of several intersecting surfaces of adjoining cells.

Geller said there is no known force that could have created such a large structure in the time since the alleged Big Bang. "Something is missing from our model that is very important," she said. It may take more than a decade, but Geller said she believes "there will be a paradigm shift that may render obsolete prevailing models of the formation of large structures in the universe."

Euthanasia

Mercy killing causes 30% of deaths in Holland

There is a "startling incidence" of mercy killings in Holland the *Financial Times* of London reports on Feb. 23 in an article headlined, "Dutch euthanasia on the increase."

"Euthanasia may account for as many as one in three deaths in the Netherlands," the article reports. "Between 10,000 and 40,000 deaths a year result from euthanasia. . . . About 54% of the deaths are due to passive euthanasia, where medical treatment is stopped, and 46% to active euthanasia, where a poisonous drug is given."

The *Financial Times* mentions that one of the architects of euthanasia legalization is Jakob Kohnstamm, a parliamentarian from the Democratic 66 party. Kohnstamm's father Max Kohnstamm co-founded the Trilateral Commission with David Rockefeller in 1972-73.

Ironically, the piece appears at a time when the new Dutch Development Minister Jan Pronk, who is tied to the Socialist International and the Club of Rome, is threatening to orga-

nize an aid cut-off to Indonesia because of its recent execution of four men charged with terrorism during uprisings in the 1960s, claiming "human rights" abuses.

Nuclear Safety

NRC redefines risk to reflect reality

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission has decided to change its policy on risk to conform to the actual risk.

Speaking to a meeting of health physicists and nuclear engineers, NRC chairman Kenneth Carr said that the NRC would soon come out with a new policy that defines some low-level nuclear wastes as "below regulatory concern" and therefore not in need of regulation.

This new category, known as BRC, will give the NRC more time and money to deal with real problems, Carr said. "We have to focus on real, not perceived threats," he said, stressing the importance of science education. Carr ridiculed the "risk eliminators" who want to eradicate all risk, no matter what the cost, but who think nothing of such risky activities as driving a car, or taking an airplane ride.

Poverty

Communist China's poor are getting poorer

Poverty among poor in the People's Republic of China is becoming worse, according to figures published in Beijing, the British *Guardian* reported Feb. 21.

Nearly 36% of families in 19 cities suffered a fall in income last year, the Chinese State Statistical Bureau reported, and the real earnings of "a number of farmers" fell.

China is so desperately poor that average per capita income is only about \$200 per year. GNP only grew 3.9% last year, after rising 11% in 1988. The Chinese are making ludicrous efforts to conceal the huge unemployment rate, which they put at only 2.7%. The

tens of millions of rural workers laid off when some 3 million rural industries were closed last year, are not counted as unemployed because they are deemed to have jobs waiting for them on their family farms. Such jobs, of course, do not exist.

The "floating population" of migrant workers is now officially estimated at 60-80 million, but observers estimate the actual figure is probably double that. Millions are also partially unemployed because most factories can only operate 3-4 days a week due to energy shortages.

Transportation

Trucking had worst year of the decade in 1989

The "Quarterly Survey Of General Freight Carrier Operating Results" for the third quarter of 1989, issued in mid-February by the Regular Common Carrier Conference, stated that 1989 has been the worst year of the 1980s for the trucking industry. The report also makes clear there is an ongoing depression in the physical economy in the U.S.

Between the third quarter of 1988 and the third quarter of 1989, "expenses increased nearly twice as fast as revenue," the report said. "Consistent with the slowdown in our economy, tonnage dropped 3%. After tax net income plummeted 42.5%."

The report stated that after initial review of the fourth quarter, "preliminary data reveals worsening conditions, which will result in 1989 being the worse year of the decade."

Development

Joxe: fight drugs and underdevelopment as one

Drugs and economic underdevelopment must be fought simultaneously, French Interior Minister Pierre Joxe told the United Nations special session on drugs on Feb. 23.

"The constant concern of countries must

be to integrate the anti-drug fight with a global fight against underdevelopment," Joxe said. All fronts must be covered at the same time: prevention, rehabilitation, law enforcement, shutting down money laundering, and reconversion to crops in producer countries, he said.

Joxe indirectly attacked the Bush administration for refusing to give real economic aid to Ibero-American nations, as French President François Mitterrand had done during his trip to Colombia last October. Joxe also met with several U.S. anti-drug experts and pointed out the obvious contradiction that the U.S. is the world's largest producer of marijuana. According to the French daily *France Soir*, when the U.S. took over this market, Colombia went into cocaine production.

Joxe strongly warned against the decriminalization of drugs. "Most studies show that the easier the access to drugs, the more they are consumed. The more they are consumed, the more they cause addiction. Some people maintain that only so-called 'softdrugs' should be tolerated. But they forget the fact that tolerating a soft-drug network means tolerating a network which has every economic reason to sell hard drugs as well."

Patents

Percentage issued to U.S. inventors falling

Inventors in the United States received only 52% of all patents granted in 1988, down from 62% in 1978. During the same period, the Japanese share of U.S. patents rose from 10.5% to 20.7%, paralleling the increase in their research and development funding which was twice as fast as that of the U.S.

The second worst field was in motor vehicles, where Americans received only 43% of new patents in 1988, compared to 26% for Japan, 13% to West Germany, with the remainder going to France, Canada, Britain, and a few other countries.

The fourth worst area for Americans was the field of computer memory; the fifth worst was photography; the sixth was internal combustion engines. The worst area was "fishing, trapping, and vermin destroying."

Briefly

● **AN ARIANE 44-L** rocket, carrying two Japanese communication satellites, exploded two minutes after launch on Feb. 22. The explosion will ground the French launch system until the problem and a solution are found.

● **MACHINE TOOL** orders were down 14% in the U.S. in January and 4.2% in December compared to a year earlier, according to the Association for Manufacturing Technology. "Orders are extremely slow," Neil Coughlin, vice president of Kingsbury Machine Tool Corp., told the Feb. 26 *Wall Street Journal*.

● **POLAND** is being devastated by International Monetary Fund policies as inflation hit 67% in January, 22% higher than expected; real income fell far below the promised 20% drop; unemployment went from zero to 55,000 in one month; and coal prices jumped, the Feb. 22 *Wall Street Journal* reported. Unemployment is expected to reach between 400,000 and 4 million out of 39 million people.

● **SELA**, the Latin American Economic System, released figures showing that Latin America has paid \$250 billion in debt service between 1982 and 1989, during which time total indebtedness increased to a total of \$434 billion.

● **ONE NUCLEAR PLANT** saved 4.5 billion gallons of oil, according to the Jan. 2 Oswego, N.Y. *Palladium Times*. The FitzPatrick nuclear power plant near Oswego produced 6.06 billion kilowatt-hours of electricity in 1989, while operating 90% of the time. This is the energy equivalent of 4.5 billion gallons of oil—4,100 times the amount spilled by the Exxon Valdez off Alaska.

● **THE GALILEO** spacecraft succeeded in taking all 64 scheduled Venus images despite computer software problems at the start of the Venus encounter, according to NASA officials. The data will be sent back to Earth when Galileo swings around Earth in the fall.