

EIR Science & Technology

SDI revisited: lessons we can draw from the Gulf war

The Bush administration's proposed revision of the Strategic Defense Initiative is fatally flawed. Carol White contrasts it with the original SDI plan of Lyndon LaRouche.

Every war is a "crucial experiment" whose results must be studied by those who must plan for future wars. The U.S. military, in the grips of manic euphoria following the conquest of Iraq, is so far deluding itself that this war (which was, after all, against a far weaker adversary), has proven that the United States is now invincible. Soviet strategists are drawing far more useful conclusions from their analysis of the lessons to be learned from the Gulf war.

They are warning that the failure of the Iraqi air defense, which utilized Soviet technology, means that the U.S.S.R. must launch a crash military-technology and research and development buildup, so as not to be overtaken by the U.S. and NATO technologies and capabilities. For example, in a Feb. 28 press conference, Soviet Defense Minister Dmitri Yazov answered questions posed by the U.S.S.R. Supreme Soviet concerning the evident failures of Iraqi anti-aircraft defenses in stopping the air offensive by the multinational coalition. "What happened in Kuwait and Iraq necessitates a review of the attitudes to Army air defense and the country's entire air defense system," he proclaimed.

Similarly, Gen.-Col. Rakhim S. Akchurin, commander of Soviet anti-aircraft forces, told TASS: "Today our anti-air defenses are capable of repelling the attacks of any air targets, *but what will happen in two or three years?* The echo of missile thunder in the desert must put us on our guard" (emphasis added).

While various Soviet military spokesmen have pointed out that the coalition forces used state-of-the-art weaponry—from Stealth fighter-bombers to laser-guided bombs—against the previous generation of technologies that the Sovi-

ets had supplied to the Iraqis, nonetheless they are arguing against any cuts in the Soviet military budget. Clearly, the arms race is on again

Speaking to the government paper *Izvestia*, Gen.-Maj. Nikolai I. Kutsenko, deputy head of the Soviet General Staff's Center for Operational-Strategic Studies, responded to the question of whether the Soviet Army had weapons similar to those used by the multinational forces against Iraq: "Yes, but not all. This is something for our military research and development to think about."

One striking lesson of the Gulf war, is the crucial nature of air defense. The Iraqi capability was no match for the barrage of missiles and bombing raids which they faced. While the United States did not use nuclear weapons, almost equal devastation was caused by the sheer volume of incendiary and explosive devices dropped. This effectively wiped out Iraqi land-defense capabilities. Had the Iraqis a tactical air defense which incorporated advanced electromagnetic devices, then the U.S. might well have faced a serious land war.

What the U.S. military should consider

While the United States' anti-missile defense system was also based upon relatively unsophisticated devices, this was far less problematic from the U.S. perspective, because Iraqi firepower was so much weaker. Nonetheless, problems did emerge in the Patriot defense against Scuds launched at Israel and Saudi Arabia, since the debris which fell on populated areas, from even the limited number of missiles launched by the Iraqis, did cause damage and death. Moreover, the debris



Lyndon LaRouche had campaigned for a ballistic missile defense based on advanced physical principles for years before Reagan's March 23, 1983 announcement of SDI. Organizers for the LaRouche movement took this concept to the American people; this photo is from March 26, 1986.

that did fall was uncontaminated. With the qualification that the U.S. hyped Iraq's non-conventional threat, had a Patriot exploded a nuclear, biological, or chemical warhead over Tel Aviv or Dharhan, it would have enhanced the NBC missile's destructive effects, not deflected them. The U.S. Patriot was, after all, a missile intended for the point defense of high-priority targets such as missile launchers, which are located in underpopulated desert areas, not densely populated cities. Were a Patriot, in such circumstances, merely to deflect an incoming missile from its chosen target, a victory would be scored. Of course, such is not the case in a city.

In the case of the war between the United States and Iraq, cost was not a major problem in judging the effectiveness of a defense system. Compared to the United States, the Iraqis had scant resources with which to challenge a U.S. defense. However, in a U.S. war against the Soviets, cost would become a serious part of the offensive-defensive equation. Here again a defensive shield based upon advanced physical principles is incomparably cheaper than the one-to-one cost ratio of deploying two \$0.5 million Patriots against one \$1 million Scud.

The staff of *21st Century Science & Technology* has prepared a review of the present U.S. ballistic missile defense configuration, based upon President Bush's most recent proposals and relevant lessons from the Gulf war. It makes the

case that even in the Gulf war, all the belligerents would have profited from having air and missile defenses modeled along the same principles that were proposed by Lyndon LaRouche in 1982, when he stated the case for what later became known as a Strategic Defense Initiative (SDI) based upon advanced, new physical principles.

LaRouche's program for mutually assured survival

Before proceeding to that review, there is another point to be made. LaRouche's SDI was intended to be an important factor in ending the Cold War. It was meant to offer a defensive shield which would guarantee over 90% protection to a U.S. population threatened by an all-out nuclear strike. A major component of that program, however, was to transform the discussion of détente from the gamesmanship of a Henry Kissinger, to a genuine accord which would replace competition over arms by joint, large-scale global infrastructure projects, and an ambitious program to colonize Mars within the first half of the next century.

The Bush administration rejects every element of this program, including an laser-based SDI; even if the Bush White House were to incorporate technical elements of the program suggested by LaRouche and his associates, without the broader framework which he elaborated, such an effort

could not avert a third world war. Without such a commitment to a republican development program, it would instead have the opposite effect; the Soviets would rightly consider it to be merely another aspect of Bush's imperialist new order. They would view it, as they came to view the Gulf deployment, as a threat to their own national interest.

In the period from 1977 to 1979, LaRouche was occupied with the problem of formulating an alternative strategy to the insane Kissingerian policy of Mutually Assured Destruction, which aptly bears the acronym MAD. One concern of that period was that forward-based missiles significantly shortened the time that either superpower had in which to decide a response, if it believed it was under attack. Intercontinental war appeared to be on an increasingly shorter fuse.

Reviewing Soviet defensive strategy and Soviet capabilities, it became obvious to LaRouche that the United States needed what later became known as the Strategic Defense Initiative, but one based upon the most advanced physical principles which utilized the whole of the electromagnetic spectrum from radio waves to high-power X-ray lasers. Furthermore, it became clear that not only had the Soviets come to the same conclusion, but that they were fairly advanced in constructing their own version of such a system.

We emphasize that the kind of crash program on the scale of the Manhattan Project that LaRouche envisaged would not have been a drain on the U.S. economy: To the contrary, it could have been expected to produce major spinoffs within the civilian economy which would have enhanced the economic productivity as a whole. The analogy here was the 10:1 payback from NASA research and development investment which landed a man on the Moon. Begun in 1961 by President John F. Kennedy, what was to become the Apollo Program acted as a science driver throughout the economy at least into the 1970s. This would not be the case for the Soviets, however, because of the bureaucratic stagnation embedded in their socio-economic system.

A Soviet crash development of such an antiballistic missile defense system would be a serious cost to the U.S.S.R. economy. LaRouche foresaw this, and he proposed that the United States share SDI technology with the Soviets. After all, what was intended was a defensive shield, not a margin to facilitate a first strike. This was accepted by President Ronald Reagan in his formulation of the Strategic Defense Initiative, in his March 23, 1983 address announcing the program. Had the Soviets not stupidly rejected this, then the SDI could have become—in President Reagan's own words—a system for Mutually Assured Survival.

The LaRouche proposal was undermined, from the first, on the U.S. side by the High Frontier crowd associated with Gen. Danny Graham. They argued for using a cheaper path toward developing a defense system they falsely conceived would achieve the same end result. As *EIR* and the Fusion Energy Foundation said then—reviewed in the report below—Graham's utterly incompetent proposal was a white

elephant which could not do the same job; moreover, it would be far more costly to install, because it would inject no qualitative advances in technology into the economy.

LaRouche's program was initially endorsed by President Reagan and by Dr. Edward Teller in many of its key features, but, through a process of attrition, partly because of opposition at home, and because of violent opposition from the Soviets, it was ultimately sabotaged. A more profound reason for the defeat of the SDI was the shift in fundamental policy.

Once the United States became committed to establishing a new "Roman Empire" with the British, then economic benefits from the SDI were no longer relevant. The Anglo-Americans' intention was for the U.S. economy—like that of Rome—to be based upon the forced collection of tribute—usury backed by force of arms. They were prepared to make a deal with the Soviets, so that they would have a share in the spoils—at least in the near term. Wars of the future would then take the form of gunboat diplomacy in the envisaged post-Cold War era. However, the emergence of an economic collapse and social crisis within the Soviet Union convinced the Anglo-Americans such a power-sharing arrangement might well not be necessary: There was, they boasted in private, now really only one superpower.

Unfortunately for these pipe-dreamers, the reality is that the Soviets maintain the power of a nightmare arsenal which, within any 30-minute period, is capable of doing to the continental United States precisely what the Anglo-American colossus has done to the Iraqi nation. Furthermore, the arrogance with which the British and Americans are flaunting their aspirations toward global imperial control virtually ensures that the Soviets will make a turn toward some form of dictatorship by the military, merely to ensure the survival of Russia.

U.S. policy accommodation to an Anglo-American accord began no later than the assassination of President McKinley and his replacement by the evil empire enthusiast, Theodore Roosevelt. This union between American *brawn* and British *brains*, gave us two world wars already in this century, and is leading us down the road to a third.

The 'Thirty Years' War' of 1912-45

Indeed it is no exaggeration to describe the period from the inevitability of the First World War until the end of the Second World War in 1945, as a kind of Thirty Years' War, similar to the 1618-48 Thirty Years' War that wracked Central Europe. Two other analogies to the 20th-century period can be derived from the Peloponnesian War in the history of ancient Greece, and, in a sense, the Napoleonic Wars. We choose 1912, when the Balkan wars erupted, as the actual starting point for World War I.

As LaRouche has developed in many places, and as I wrote in my book *The New Dark Ages Conspiracy*, the British—with enthusiastic support from the Theodore Roosevelt-

Harriman faction—created the conditions for the emergence of both world wars, by the same balance-of-power politics urged by the British and Henry Kissinger today. This policy was intended to break the power of Germany and France as industrial forces and to undermine any pre-Bolshevik republican tendencies in Russia to the same end. Similarly in Japan, the Meiji reformers were undermined. Let Germany fight Russia, let Italy and France be destroyed, and—with help from the dumb giant across the Atlantic—Britain would maintain its power.

This historical process has dominated the span of this century, and it is understanding this which allows us to understand George Bush's military policies and to situate within this his proposal for a transmuted SDI.

Military policy does not merely operate in the geopolitical domain, but involves broader cultural concerns as well. The Anglo-Americans wish to revive the moribund British Empire along the lines of the Roman Empire, but they do not want to foster an industrial revival which would foster technological optimism in the population. Such a citizenry would not tolerate the moral degeneracy of the U.S. destruction of Iraq and massacre of its population.

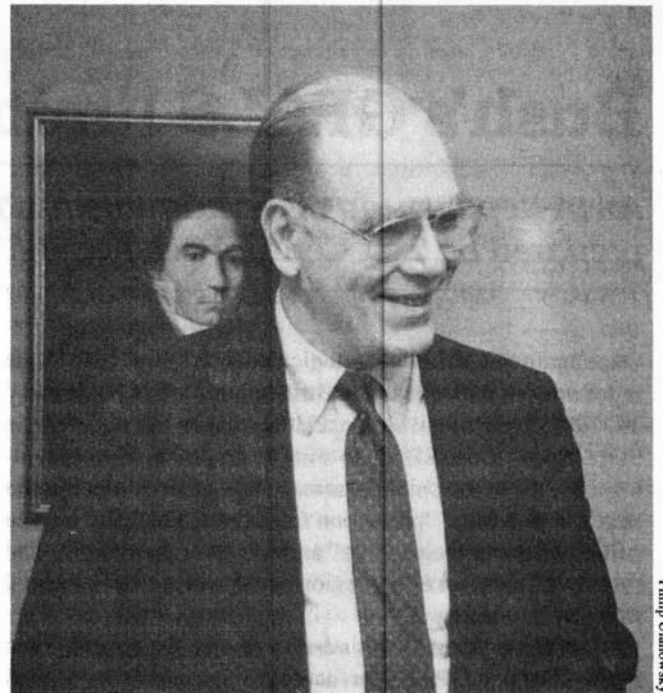
The Anglo-Americans do not want the kind of world in which the use of technology fosters and requires the development of a scientifically oriented and educated labor force in general. In the vendetta against Iraq, control of oil was a factor. But the very existence of an Arab nation, which was committed to developing an economy based upon modern technology, to educating its people, and to creating a scientifically trained work force to accomplish this, was anathema.

LaRouche's SDI proposal ran completely counter to the 20-year environmentalist push to discredit science within the advanced sector populations, and to replace it with a form of irrational neo-paganism such as the Gaia cult. A serious effort to implement the SDI, would have demanded a transformation in the U.S. educational system similar to what occurred during the Kennedy period, as a concomitant of the Apollo Program.

LaRouche's SDI was not just a military policy, but an economic and a cultural policy as well. It was intended to encourage the Soviets to make a shift away from communism and brute nationalism, toward the kind of republicanism upon which America was founded. The tool for doing this would have been to create cultural optimism among the Soviet population, by technological exchange. Emphasis upon a strategic ballistic missile defense based on new physical principles could have provided the kind of science driver to transform the Soviet economy and culture.

The Food for Peace initiative

When, by 1988, it had become clear that the SDI was no longer a vehicle for such transformation, LaRouche offered a new variant intended to serve the same *fundamental* objective: This was his Food for Peace proposal. Later this was elaborat-



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Lyndon LaRouche at a Jan. 17, 1983 press conference in New York, exposing Heritage Foundation and New York Times "leaks" about offensive beam weapons, which were intended to sabotage the policy President Reagan was preparing to announce to the nation that spring.

ed into a fully worked out plan whereby a unified Germany could become the locomotive of development for the whole of Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union by investing in major infrastructure development projects to unify a Europe, in de Gaulle's words, "from the Atlantic to the Urals."

White House policy in Washington today is exactly the opposite: It is to destroy the German economy and use North-South population wars to force submission not only from the developing sector, but from the nations of Europe as well, to a new Roman Empire. This is George Bush's new world order. This is the basis for his present military strategy.

Ironically, Bush's strategic thinkers have overlooked the Soviet question. In the manic arrogance of apparently overwhelming success in the war against Iraq, Bush and the British have convinced themselves that they can bully the Soviets with impunity. They have consistently underestimated the signs of a political shift within the U.S.S.R. toward the re-emergence of a hardline military faction into political power. They are underestimating the determination of Russian nationalists to defend the Rodina, or Motherland, in a manner strikingly reminiscent of the similar fatal blunder by Hitler and by Napoleon before him. Thus, the Anglo-American military strategy depends on the blitzkrieg to overwhelm a small, relatively weak opponent.

Bush's revised Strategic Defense Initiative is a case in point.