Editorial

SDI spins off major collaboration

The Russian offer for a joint program to develop antimissile defenses in collaboration with the United States, announced on April 2 in the newspaper *Izvestia*, was widely debunked by western media and government spokesmen with whom *EIR* discussed it. Some went so far as to declare that the "Trust" proposal was an April Fools' Day joke, despite television and other press coverage in Russia.

Far from being a joke, the proposal was discussed at the April 3-4 Clinton-Yeltsin summit. In fact, it represented a major reevaluation by a section of the scientific and military-industry grouping in Russia of the original proposal presented by President Reagan in the famous March 23, 1983 speech which launched his Strategic Defense Initiative. At that time, the Soviets, correctly recognizing Lyndon LaRouche as the author of the notion of basing a jointly developed ABM system on advanced physical principles, not only rejected the proposal, but also brutally attacked LaRouche for raising it.

The Soviets feared the SDI would create an economic competition between themselves and the U.S. which they could not win without making major changes in their economic and political system; otherwise they would be unable to assimilate the anticipated cascade of new technologies into their moribund economy.

As it turned out, the Soviets secretly carried out work on their version of the SDI, while using every tactic in their arsenal to try to sabotage the effort of the U.S. President. Without U.S. collaboration, just what they feared occurred, and the communist regimes throughout the East bloc collapsed under their own dead weight.

The lesson from this bitter experience has not been lost upon those Russians who framed the "Trust" proposal—offering to share advanced microwave technology with the United States in order to create the potential for downing incoming missiles at a height of 30 miles up, by deploying plasmoids at them.

According to an article in *Aviation Week* of May 24, there has actually been an ongoing collaboration for a year and a half between Russian scientists at the science city Arzamas-16, where the April 2 proposal was apparently initiated, and Los Alamos National Laboratory. Work on the generation of electromagnetic pulses at Los Alamos and high-powered microwave generation in Russian laboratories was shared. At first the discussions were informal, but by November 1992, this joint collaboration was formalized.

The Trust proposal involved the intersection of two powerful microwave beams, in order to create a major disturbance in the atmosphere, which would destroy the capabilities of an incoming nuclear-armed warhead. The ostensible technologies of the ongoing Los Alamos-Arzamas collaboration are similar in nature, but not necessarily identical. Nonetheless the Russian capabilities are most impressive.

The Russians' experimental electromagnetic pulse (EMP) generator is reportedly able to generate microwave pulses of over 200 million amperes, in the extremely short timespan of less than one-millionth of a second. This result falls at least within the order of magnitude of microwave power density required to propagate a pulse long distances through the atmosphere at high power.

Similar, less powerful devices developed by the U.S. Air Force during the past four years, apparently as the fruit of work at Los Alamos, are designed for placement in cruise missiles, specially adapted with windows in front, to allow projection of a microwave beam. The Air Force design, which was supposedly used during the Gulf war to interfere with Iraqi battle management, is intended to paralyze the electronics in airplanes, missiles, and tanks, and to destroy the functioning of computer systems as well.

According to a press release from Los Alamos, work on controlling EMP pulse devices and microwave generators will spin off many applications to the civilian economy. These have implications for high-temperature superconductor work and for generating fusion plasmas as well.

We welcome the knowledge that such important collaboration is already going on between the United States and Russia on the scientific and technical level. The political commitment to a program, such as was indicated in the Trust proposal, will no doubt follow.